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thesis entitled  
Social Protest Artists in Western Art

presented by

Sadayoshi Omoto

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

M.A. degree in Art

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Walter H. Abel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Walter" and last name "Abel" clearly distinguishable.

Major professor

Date August 24, 1950

SOCIAL PROTEST ARTISTS IN WESTERN ART

By

Sadayoshi Omoto

A THESIS

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Michigan  
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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1950

# THESIS

SOCIAL PROTEST ARTISTS IN WESTERN ART

By

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August 25, 1950

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The work on this thesis represents a culmination point in the recognition of the role of the artist in society. My awareness of this relationship was heightened when I came to Michigan State College and enrolled in the Art History courses. My background in this matter was quite limited because of the different type of training I had received in my undergraduate days. Today, I realize more fully that the artist does have a responsibility to society, and in the same vein, society also owes a responsibility to the individual artist. One can broaden this concept further to include the whole field of art, and of how we should strive to bring art and society into a closer unified harmonious whole.

In addition to the studies in books and magazine articles, I have also examined reproductions of paintings and prints in trying to get at the core of "protest art". I would like to acknowledge my appreciation to Mr. Walter Abell, my major professor for his interest in my work, his constant guidance, and for his kindness in reading my thesis during his leave from class duties. Also to Miss Mildred Jeffers who so kindly took upon her the task of typing this manuscript. I also wish to thank the numerous friends with whom I have talked regarding this subject matter, for their kindly suggestions and encouragement.

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Credit for the reproductions is due Mr. William Rice,  
a fellow-student at Michigan State College.

August 25, 1950

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## INTRODUCTION

In the face of the threat of a Third World War, more and more people are asking themselves the question of "Why?" Why do nations have to kill, pillage, and ruin? Those of us of the present generation have known very few years which we can truthfully call "peaceful" years.

For those of us who accept the Malthusian theory of population--that wars and other catastrophes will overtake the earth to take care of the surplus population--then wars are an inevitable result. Nothing can be done to prevent wars and famines and other similar catastrophes. Sitting back and saying that nothing can be done is just one attitude. However, when we look back on history, we will notice that there were and are those strong-minded ones who have taken and are taking an active role in trying to combat the ills of a civilization.

The artist is among those who has made himself heard in this protest. While there are those who write in protest, the artist has painted and drawn in trying to arouse the people to the sickness which is in a civilization. In my studies in Art History, I noticed that there were those instances in which the artist painted or drew in his own "protest" against a wrong which he observed about him. I felt that because of his strongly held views, he was able to instill depth and meaning into his work. This aroused my interest in the subject for this thesis,

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"Social Protest Artists in Western Art".

Though the artistic group comprises a small segment of society, I feel that what they have to say in their works should not be taken too lightly. Whether we agree with them or not is not the main concern--the main point should be that we, as the people, should recognize and open our eyes to what the artist is trying to convey.

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to study and examine the role that the artists have played in this "protest" art, and to evaluate their effectiveness in their "protest". In the present world situation, it may be that the artist can be another voice entered into the cry for the betterment of Humanity, rather than its destruction.

Not only will the aspect of "protest" be studied, but an attempt will also be made to stress the fact that the artist is an integral part of society. Too many people are prone to consider the artist as a misfit in society, as someone who has a personality problem and as one who is an eccentric. We should think of the artist as one of us, and that he certainly has a worthwhile contribution to make to society.

In this particular study, I will deal with the negative rather than the positive aspect of social conscious art. By this I mean that this thesis will deal with those artists who "protested" against something, rather than those who simply made commentaries on the life about them. Certain artists will serve as key figures in this study, and my main concern is with the subject matter rather than the painting or print strictly in aesthetic terms.

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In my approach to this study, I will begin with a consideration of some of the general principles underlying this type of "protest" art. A brief general survey will then be undertaken in which I will give a short historical resumé of the development of this type of art. Three main themes will be discussed: "Society," "Injustice and Corruption," and "War." In discussing these themes, I have selected a few of the main exponents of each theme. My aim is not to provide a complete history of these artists, but only a critical analysis as to their works and their approach in "Social Protest Art". In the final analysis, I will attempt to point out instances where "protest" art was effective, and also to draw some general implications from this type of art.

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## THE ARTIST, ART, AND SOCIETY

For nearly two centuries, the cultural traditions we inherited from European Renaissance have been losing substance--that is, in plastic concreteness. In place of craft and great architecture, architectural paintings, and sculpture, we have "...the mass-produced, insensitive fabrication of the machine along with its characteristic by-product--centralization, slums, social neurosis, a devitalized proletariat, a dehumanized intelligentsia."<sup>1</sup> This appears to be a biting condemnation of our age, and yet there is no denying the fact that such are the conditions as they exist. It is in this type of civilization that I feel that the artist has made his voice heard.

Today, art has become divorced from ordinary activities and thus, there exists a chasm which separates the mass of mankind from the artists. This cleft should not exist, for the artist "...is...a social creature, always wide-awake in the face of the heart-rending bitter or sweet events of the world and wholly fashioning himself according to their image..."<sup>2</sup> "The artist...is a unit of a necessary social organization and cannot arrive even at

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Read, "The Grass Roots of Art", Wittenborn and Company, New York, 1947, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Juan Larrea, Guernica-Picasso, Introduction by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Curt Valentin, New York, 1947, p. 13

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the threshold of his potentialities without the conditions which a culture provides."<sup>3</sup> Man is a social animal, and the artist is no exception, "For the artist, however isolated he may choose to think himself, is still in contact with other men."<sup>4</sup>

It is because we have had those men who have been misfits in society, and these men (as van Gogh and Utrillo) have received publicity in this respect, that the mass of the people are quick to stereotype the artist. However, I feel that even though we have had those who led a bizarre life, we have also had those who were good solid citizens. Hiler<sup>5</sup> holds the view that artists in general have made poor social adaptations. "The only thing which makes the artist's chance of adapting himself to the social set up any good is the same thing which makes his general social adaptation bad; namely, his sensitivity (my italics). This capacity for feeling gives him a certain barometric quality of intuition."<sup>6</sup> Certainly it appears then that the artist is more sensitive to those conditions about him. (This will be pointed out more fully later in this thesis). It is this matter of sensitivity which I feel is important, and thus the artist is able to grasp those things which the average man may

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert Read, Art and Society, Macmillan Company, New York, 1937, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> George Boas, "The Social Responsibility of the Artist," College Art Journal, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 275 (Summer, 1947).

<sup>5</sup> Hilaire Hiler, Henry Miller, and William Sarovan, Why Abstract?, James Laughlin, New York.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

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overlook. "A society that finds no place for the artist, which gives him nothing to make and leaves him to starve, cannot expect to get much out of him. Without faith in himself and the assurance that comes from being wanted, he will be driven back into himself. It has been said the artist is a focal point of experience wider than his own."<sup>7</sup> In this study of "protest" artists, can we not say that this greater sensitivity and more universal experience are two attributes of the artist which single him out among the others?

Yet, it is his environment which will mold him into the individual that he is--his reactions will be recorded through his own medium.

George Boas<sup>8</sup> has made a classification of the artists in his article, "The Social Responsibility of the Artist". He has classified them as follows:

- (1) "Narrative"--those who relate.
- (2) "Lyrical"--those who may seem to illustrate a fact, but they are not about that incident or fact; they are about themselves.
- (3) "Hortatory"--those who pass judgment on the human race, as in men like Daumier. "They are supposed to change people's minds, not simply to record, to tell stories, to express emotion, though they also do these things."<sup>9</sup>

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Margaret H. Bulley, Art and Understanding, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1937, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> George Boas, op. cit., pp. 270-273.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 273

It is this last category of artists which is of interest in this particular paper. It is the task of this artist to make the picture come to life when perceived, and this is at the time when the perceivers contributions comes from his whole total past. Admittedly, those of us who have never felt need or want in any respect, will have less sympathy and understanding than one who has, when they both look upon a scene depicting the crowded slum conditions of a large metropolitan city. The artist is trying to tell the people of the evils about them, of how we should all be aware and try to correct these for the betterment of Mankind. One prerequisite for this type of an artist is the sincerity of the artist himself, for unless he or she does feel strongly, certainly the work will lack depth and meaning. It is "Simply to tell the truth...whether one does anything about it or not,"<sup>10</sup> and I feel that if a work of art is able to start the onlooker thinking and becoming aware of the evils, then art will have at least taken a step in the right direction. "The essential nature of art will be found...in its capacity to create a synthetic and self-consistent world...a convincing representation of the totality of experience: a mode, therefore of envisaging the individual's perception of some aspect of universal truth (my italics)."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 276.

<sup>11</sup> Herbert Read, Art and Society, Macmillan Company, New York, 1937, p. xii.

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Up to this point, I believe we can safely say that (1) the artists is an integral part of society, and (2) that his sensitivity gives him an opportunity to express himself in his own medium. One may well ask, what is the importance of fine art for society? Gotshalk<sup>12</sup> has given two answers--the first one is that fine art can be a spiritual asset. It can be one of great immediate and self-rewarding good in terms of the "spirit" of experience. Whenever one looks upon a great work of art, the active psychological rapport set up between the work and the onlooker does give one the spiritual asset of living with the painting. It is like a great spiritual sensation. The second importance of fine art in society as given by Gotshalk, is that it can be a social force. "In short, fine art transforms what social action everywhere embodies and thus implicitly a social force in the way creation and appreciation of an object which serves purely aesthetic purposes."<sup>13</sup> Once again, it is this aspect of the social force of fine art which is pertinent in this thesis.

In general, there are two methods by which this aspect of fine art can be communicated to the people. First, we have the explicit method. This method is direct and open; the message is undeniably there in all its

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<sup>12</sup>

D.W.Gotshalk, Art and the Social Order, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1947, p. 202 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 204

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nakedness. Goya's bitter indictments against war in his series of Desastres de la Guerra, certainly is direct with the bloody, gruesome phase of war. This approach does have its drawbacks however, for directive art needs pressures and terrors from external sources to make it effective. In time of a critical situation, such as a national calamity, or an economic or moral crisis, it is effective. However, this method usually has short-ranged effectiveness, for once the external circumstances are altered, the effectiveness is diminished. We have to employ more elementary and conventional techniques, and thus have to "...sacrifice all the subtle and novel possibilities of fine art."<sup>14</sup>

The other method is the implicit one--the method of "...burying them (the messages) in the perceptual texture of the creation so that they form a kind of framework within which the subject is articulated."<sup>15</sup> Gauguin utilized this means when he fled to the South Sea islands to seek tranquility and peace--his implied message was that the civilization in which he lived was filled with decadence and disillusionment. Instead of painting such a civilization, he fled from it and painted those harmonious things he found in the South Sea islands.

In comparison with the explicit means, the implicit method lacks the pointedness and immediate brute force

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 206.

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of the more blunt directive one. The message or social doctrine is more vague and indeterminate, and covered with subtlety. In the explicit method, there is no question as to the message or "protest" when one first looks upon a work done in that approach. However, in the implicit approach, the onlooker will have to react in an active manner to the work before him before he is able to comprehend its meaning. As we like to have room for the imagination rather than having everything presented in its entirety, in like manner, the subtle "behind the painting" message is more effective if room is left for the individual to "fill in" the gaps. In speaking of this latter implicit method, Gotshalk stated that:

"Their force and vitality can be based upon the force and vitality of the art itself... The art can become saturated with the outlook of the artist, and this outlook can be empowered by all subtleties and devices of the art...(this method) involves a more 'natural,' complete, effective, and enduring fashion of fine art and social doctrine; it permits the articulation of outlooks that are more subtle in aesthetic appeal and more elastic and general in social application; it is more favorable to the creation of objects less marred by intellectual distraction and gross error; and it employs the doctrinal element in such a way that, erroneous or not, it can be of permanent usefulness as an artistic instrument."<sup>16</sup>

I feel that the first approach verges on the rim of propaganda. In this paper I do not intend to deal in the realm of propaganda, but rather in what I have termed more of the creative art in "protest". For example, a political

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 207-208.

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cartoon is a type of "protest" art technically speaking, and yet it seems to lack the depth say of a political "protest" of a Gropper, or a Daumier. The political cartoonist has a job to do (with mercenary end in mind), and that is to dramatize the tactical wants of a party line from day to day. He is working for someone else, or a party, and thus is not creative to the extent in which Daumier was successful. Propaganda is "...a special pleading of a sort,"<sup>17</sup> and it can be ephemeral or enduring. This is not to discount all propaganda and all political cartoons as unworthy of a place in this "protest" art, for certainly we do have works which have attained stature in its own right. Zigrosser has made an interesting comment on this aspect when he stated that "It will be a work of art only if its appeal is enduring, if the artist speaks purely in terms of his art, if his allegiance is not to party, but to humanity, if the issues are the eternal verities--death, suffering, love, children."<sup>18</sup> I am in agreement with Zigrosser on this point, for it is just this type of art which I wish to include in this study of "protest artists". Propaganda poster works have been undertaken by many well-known artists, it is true, and yet to deal in the realm of posters and political cartoons will constitute a topic in itself.

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<sup>17</sup> Carl Zigrosser, Kaethe Kollwitz, H. Bittner and Comany, New York, 1946, p. 19.  
<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

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If the artist has a message to give to his society, what effect would this have on the aesthetic qualities of his work of art? There are those who contend that as soon as the subject matter (and social message) becomes so dominant, then the painting will suffer as a work of art. This is where I feel that the propaganda work (as well as illustrational) of the past war has revealed this weakness. If the subject matter can be so integrated with the painting or print, then the work will still retain its aesthetic quality. The subject matter should strengthen and condition the ordering of a design, "...as lime into bones."<sup>19</sup> "For just as in food what matters is not its flavor, its odor, its temperature, or its consistency, but its nutritive properties, so the essence of this plastic art is not color, not the charm of design, not even the perspective, the Chiaroscuro, etc., but another more hidden and more recondite dimension, and one more revolutionary, too: its communicative (my italics) power."<sup>20</sup> If we took the psychoanalytical viewpoint, then, like dreams, art is associated with desires which move and guide us. It has been like a screen upon which we project our metaphysical cravings, and the desire to place eternal and a general validity on the particular, whether it be an individual or a culture.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Margaret H. Bulley, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>20</sup> Juan Larrea, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

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Now that we have looked at the artist and his art, let us carry this analysis one step further and examine art in relationship to society. Too many people are apt to consider only the works in museums as works of art, and these to be looked upon by the selected few who can think along abstract and aesthetic lines. This should not be, for inasmuch as the artist is an integral part of our society, should not his handiwork be a part of our society also? Art in general may come under two classifications: (1) as an economic factor, that is, a quality belonging to objects which are produced to satisfy practical needs; and (2) as expression of ideals, spiritual aspirations and myths, the ideological aspect of art. Once again, our primary concern is with the latter category, that of the expression of ideals.

The ethical appeal of art is wider than the aesthetic-- it is an appeal to our more immediate interests. The emotional factor does warrant a place in a "protest" painting, simply because of its very nature, and emotions have no necessary connection with aesthetic faculties. The art of today is no different than that of the past if we can think of it in its wider scope; and that is, according to the art historian Wofflin, that art can be thought of "...primarily as expression, expression of the temper of an age and nation as well as expression of the individual temperament."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Aline B. Leuchheim, 5000 Years of Art in Western Civilization, Howell, Soskin, New York, 1946, P.197

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As the works of art reflect the society out of which they emerged, conversely, cannot the society reflect the types of art which will arise?

Not only does art serve society in terms of reflecting the kind of society, but there are other functions to be considered. Gotshalk<sup>23</sup> went to some length to propose aesthetic and nonaesthetic functions of art. Under the nonaesthetic functions he listed the following:

- (1) Satisfaction of will or desire for mastery and achievement.
- (2) Modification of the scale of values that a work of art may effect, especially in the appreciator.
- (3) Other--functional uses, as religious icon, record deed.

Under the same nonaesthetic functions, Gotshalk listed two which may be termed "psychical" functions. These are: (1) function of satisfying certain so-called "physical" group needs such as shelter, transportation; and (2) satisfying certain so-called "mental" group needs, such as the communication of feelings and experiences, the welding of the individuals of a group into a purposively active, unified society. It is this latter group which is of importance in this thesis. The individual artist, if he is able to communicate to others the same sensitivity which he feels, will tend to unify society, and thus, a healthier society will be the result. (This is on the assumption that the artist is not doing propaganda work for those who may be in power).

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<sup>23</sup> D. W. Gotshalk, op. cit. p. 157 ff.

What has just been said in the preceding paragraph may appear idealistic--it is, and yet, unless we do set our heights of idealism mixed with realism we will never attain anything close to the maximum of our aspirations. Gotshalk<sup>24</sup> listed two general conditions for the realization of the ideal. First, he stated that a good society must put the welfare of the citizen first. In regards to the artist, more freedom must be given him compatible with his responsibilities, and society must seek to cooperate with the artist. We should also have a wide and critical alertness in society to hold the artist to his responsibilities as well as to secure diffusion through society of the maximum good that art can bring. The other condition for the realization of the ideal was that "...the artist (must) reach an attitude towards the difficulties confronting his times that is truly coherent with himself as an artist."<sup>25</sup> This does not necessarily have to be in the form of a social message art, for it can be purely imaginative. "Its essential character would be disclosed not by lofty pretensions but by effective action and would be verified not by official claims but by actual effects it had on the artist's specific creation."<sup>26</sup>

With the advent of the Twentieth Century and industrialism, Gotshalk maintained that the irresponsibility of

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 226 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

artist to society and of society to the artist, was complete. "In the sooty, dynamic, gargantuan, hurly-burly of the industrial commercial society of the times, the artist hid his head like the proverbial ostrich in 'the realm of his subjective fancie'..."<sup>27</sup> It was after this that we had esoteric types of art, individualistic, rebellious, restless, and anarchistic...We had surrealism, dadaism, futurism and all the other "isms" of art. The Capitalistic system with its stress on rugged individualistic capitalism, on a commercial society was not conducive to the artist, and so he turned his back on the dynamic forces of his time. Why? Why did this take place?

Unlike the Catholic Middle Ages and the humanist Renaissance, our modern society offered nothing compelling them to stabilize the artist's mind and bring forth his best work.

Gotshalk in reply appears somewhat harsh in his condemnation when he stated that there was no solidarity of feeling and of purpose, there was no unifying religion, no general idealism, but instead there was a world which encouraged pretense and facetious achievement.

The fault for this lack of a harmonious relationship between the artist and society lies in both society and the artist. Instead of squarely facing the issues, the artist turned his back--he felt that the larger issues were no

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

longer any of his concern. "He laughed or sighed and retreated into his own little world of private observation and reverie, or he became absorbed in the methods and experimental techniques of his craft."<sup>28</sup> This then, was the situation at the turn of the century, and yet, there were those artists who were strong enough to swim against the current of their times. These are the ones who "...either make a big splash or sink beneath the stream to find a fairy grotto; or else it is said of them after their death that they saw much and traveled in strange directions and discovered new streams."<sup>29</sup>

Read<sup>30</sup> proposes three paths which the artist may take today, since he has lost the solid support of his former patrons. He can take the path of the abstract or non-objective artist. Here the primary concern is with the heightened sensibility of purity of form, economy of means, and the role of color and patterns. The second alternative is that of the super-realists, or the surrealists. This group is conscious of the lack of organic connection between art and society, and surrealism expresses "....a desire to deepen the foundation of the real, to bring about an ever dearer and at the same time ever more passionate consciousness of the world perceived by the senses."<sup>31</sup> The last path is the one which is pertinent to this thesis--and that is the route of expressionism. This is a "...type of art which

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>29</sup> Carl Zigrosser, The Book of Fine Prints, Crown Publishers, New York, 1937, 1948, p. 167

<sup>30</sup> Herbert Read, Art and Society, Macmillan Company, New York, 1937, p. 249 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

strives to depict, not the objective facts of nature, nor any abstract notion based on those facts, but the subjective feelings of the artist."<sup>32</sup> This is the category into which the "social protest artists" fall, for basically, it is individualistic and subjective.

In this particular chapter, I have endeavored to establish my basic tenets. First, that the artist is an integral part of society; secondly, that he has a high degree of sensitivity to that which is about him; and third, that art does reflect the society, and serves as a guiding light for the "mental" health of a society. I believe that these understandings are basic in this study of the role of the "Social Protest Artists in Western Art". We will then be able to evaluate better the artist, his message, his work, and the environment which was responsible for his "protest". For we must remember that a "...work of art...has its immediate origin in the consciousness of an individual; it only acquires its full significance however..to the extent that it is integrated with the general culture of a people or period."<sup>32</sup>

## GENERAL SURVEY

Before we actually undertake to examine the "social protest artists", let us take a glimpse at the historical aspect of this type of art. Why does this type of art arise? What are the conditions conducive to the fostering of "social protest" art? The answer to these questions will be found only if we are able to correlate the general development of a civilization with the various phases of art.

Let us begin with the central thesis of the Marxist writer, Plekhanov, who stated that "The tendency of artists and those concerned with art to adopt an attitude of art for art's sake arises when a hopeless contradiction exists between them and their social environment."<sup>1</sup> Or to approach this from the viewpoint of "protest art", "The so-called utilitarian concept of art, that is, the tendency to regard the function of art as a judgment on the phenomena of life and a readiness to participate in social struggles, develops and becomes established when a mutual bond of sympathy exists between a considerable section of society and those more or less actively interested in artistic creation."<sup>2</sup> To illustrate this latter point, Plekhanov

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<sup>1</sup> George V. Plekhanov, Art and Society, Critics Group, New York, 1936, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

points to the fact that when the February Revolution burst forth in 1848, many French writers who had previously advocated the theory of art for art's sake, now repudiated it. The utilitarian view of art arises out of one condition, and that being, "an intense and active interest in a given social order or social ideal, and it disappears when this interest...ceases to exist."<sup>3</sup> Thus, this "protest art" arises not only because of the individual artist's temperament and his distaste for that which is about him, but also because of his position as a part of society. No doubt, if he allies himself with the emancipatory ideas of his time, the forcefulness of his art will be heightened.

If we were to turn back to the early Middle Ages, we would find that this type of art did not exist even though there was a strong tie between artist and society by virtue of the intense religious fervor of that time. The individual artist as such, was pretty much subordinated to the dictates of the Church. However, art did serve utilitarian purposes in the sculpture work of the great cathedrals, for its purpose was to teach those who were unable to read. The great doorways, such as those of Chartres Cathedral, were like the Bible to the large mass which was unable to comprehend the written language.

With the coming of the Renaissance and its stress on

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

humanism, we had the emancipation of the individual artist from the control of the Church. In the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, especially in Holland and Flanders, we had the artist dealing with genre subjects, and there was also a growing concern for those things about them. Peter Brueghel was among the first of those who can be called social conscious artists. The role of the artist had changed, for now he was an individual, and worked much in his own manner.

At the time when etching was at its height in the seventeenth century, Callot emerged as the giant among the French etchers. This was also the time of the Intellectual Revolution which was beginning to sweep Europe. More specifically, Callot had witnessed the horrors of the Reformation troubles, the petty civil wars between princes, and the French invasion of his own province of Lorraine. It was from his experiences that he executed his series of Les Miseres de la Guerre while his memory was still vivid with the pillaging and plundering accompanying war.

Hogarth took a purposeful approach to art in England-- and that was his literary documentation and moral aim. He raised popular illustration to a socially and politically significant activity, and at the same time brought serious art down to the English masses mainly through his engravings. Hogarth came in the backwash of imported painters from the continent, as well as during the time when the British courts

patronized the arts. The Enlightenment began in England about 1680, and this climaxed the Intellectual Revolution in philosophy. John Locke issued his philosophy in which he stated that all of man's knowledge originates from sense perception. These simple ideas must then be integrated and fused into complex ideas--and this was the function of reason or understanding.

In Spain, Goya had also witnessed the ravages of war at first hand. Napoleon's army had invaded Spain (1808-1814), and the bloody May Second incident left an indelible mark on Goya's mind. Goya put down his vivid first impressions of the bloody reprisals on the part of both the French and the Spaniards in the recently discovered aquatint medium. This medium in combination with the etching process (in most cases), served Goya best in his indictment of war's brutalities.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Industrial Revolution was the big force. The introduction of machines, the disappearance of the crafts, the growth of cities, and the emergence of the factory system with the subsequent stress on material wealth, brought about the exploitation of the masses. Daumier was highly critical of the status of the working class--that is he was sympathetic with them, especially the poor of the cities and this is evidenced in his art in which he upheld the proletariat class. Daumier was also a rebel against the classical and romantic traditions, and strove to present his

works without the sentimental embellishments of the romantic school. Even though there was the mad rush for wealth, there were those who recognized the evils introduced by the Machine Age. Paul Gauguin fled this world of disillusionment and sought his peace in the primitive South Sea islands.

However, it was really in the twentieth century that we had the growth of social consciousness in both art and literature. This growth had been anticipated earlier in the works of Millet, Daumier, and Goya.

If we were to break down the twentieth century into its critical points as to "social protest art", then we may be able to analyze this whole problem a little more clearly. The first critical point is at the close of World War I. After having so many wars throughout the ages, it seemed as if the people were finally awakening to the folly of war, and that no one ever wins a war. This was the time when George Grosz and Kaethe Kollwitz both emerged with their bitter indictments against war. Both of these artists had seen the devastating effects of war. One, of the destruction of the men who had to fight and suffer, and the other, of the cruelty inflicted upon the women who had to stay behind. Jubilant throngs hailed the Armistice as the end of the "war to end all wars," but nothing is ever gained when one force spills the blood of the other and "wins" the war.

The success of the Russian Revolution of 1917, has been

given as a second critical point of the twentieth century according to Zigrosser.<sup>4</sup> The third impetus was the depression of the Thirties. Especially notable in the United States were the works of Gropper, Robinson, and Marsh. The Mexicans, Rivera and Orozco, also flourished with their works at this time. Certainly, in times like the Thirties, there was the common bond between society and the artist. To both, it was the matter of survival--of being faced with the struggle to survive under trying conditions.

However, if we were to probe deeper into this matter of social consciousness, or more specifically, "social protest art", then we will see that this art envisages the essential solidarity of all human beings. The abolition of injustice and discrimination and exploitation would make this a better world in which to live. This type of art begins to take on universal and eternal aspects in this search for a Nirvana here on earth. Read<sup>5</sup> has likened the creation of a work of art in terms of the Freudian psychological approach. Whereas the inspiration is regarded as emanating in the Id, given formal synthesis and unity by the Ego, and "...finally it may be assimilated to those ideologies or spiritual aspirations which are the peculiar creation of the Super-ego."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Carl Zigrosser, The Book of Fine Prints, Crown Publishers, New York, 1937, 1948, p. 172.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Read, Art and Society, Macmillan Company, 1937, pp. 201-202.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

The ideologies or spiritual aspirations which Read speaks of can very well be thought of in its broadest aspect as that of the improvement and betterment of Humanity.

The individual artist is left with two paths to take in the aspiration for this Earthly Paradise. With the majority, the impulse goes no further than "...a generalized sympathy for the downtrodden and oppressed...and a painful realization of the horrors of war..."<sup>7</sup> The other attitude is that which "...stems from a more specific conviction as to the cause of injustice and its eradication."<sup>8</sup> This second alternative has a dual phase. In the first place, the artist can be critical and satirical in his denunciation of the flaws which he observes in his social order. This is the negative aspect which is of concern in this thesis. The other aspect is in a more positive line--that of "...a glorification of the heroes of the class struggle, and a faint adumbration of a better world to come."<sup>9</sup> This positive view will necessarily have to be in general terms rather than specific as in the negative aspect, since the artists are not social geniuses and have no clear-cut solution for working out any new order which will be satisfactory to all.

New methods and techniques--such as etching in the seventeenth century, and aquatinting discovered in the late

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<sup>7</sup> Carl Zigrosser, The Book of Fine Prints, Crown Publishers, New York, 1937, 1938, p. 173.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

eighteenth century, certainly marked the impetus for wider dissemination of works, such as those of Goya in his bitter sarcastic commentaries on society and his indictment against war. The discovery of lithography around the beginning of the nineteenth century by a German, Aloys Senefelder, certainly accounted for the wide distribution of Daumier's works.

The advent of the Industrial Revolution altered the lives of the people so that their whole way of living had to be changed. Along with the numerous improvement and benefits from the Machine Age, we also had the ills which provided fertile ground for the now-emancipated artist to voice his opinion. Today, themes for works of art are taken from mythology and from tenement districts--and each artist has his own individual way of expressing his personal viewpoint. While there are those who may rely on vivid and accurate representation, there are those who may resort to the non-objective approach. In any case, I feel that we do have much to gain from the message of these artists, for truly, the artist does reflect his age, and in Daumier's words, "Il faut être de so temps."<sup>10</sup>

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Ynez Ghirardelli, H. Daumier, Interpreter of History, Grabhorn Press, San Francisco, 1940, p. vi.

## SOCIETY

In this particular section, I will deal with those "protest artists" who protested against some general phase of society and the people in that society. These artists will be of a number of different centuries and thus of different times. There will be no direct historical connection between them. However, dealing with a general subject such as "society" will necessarily mean that the specific effects and results of the "protest artists" will be rather indefinite.

William Hogarth (1697-1764) will be considered as a typical representative of the new middle class. Hogarth was faced with two choices when he emerged in the art world. First, he could depend on the patronage of the wealthy upper classes such as Holbein or vanDyck had to put up with; or secondly, he could use some method to reach the poorer but a wider market. His choice was the latter, and his popularity is attributed to his many engravings which sold for a few shillings apiece. Not only was there a change in the medium, but Hogarth also had to change the subject matter. He rejected in its entirety the classical traditions of the Renaissance and the convention and idealism of the Grand Manner. He claimed "...that he returned to the humility and

truth of nature."<sup>1</sup> However, according to Read, "Actually he returned to that humoristic and realistic transcription of nature already embodied in the fiction and drama of his period."<sup>2</sup>

The English scene of Hogarth's time was an imperfect world, and the average Englishman had to enjoy himself as well as a poor human being could under existing conditions. Bowen described this age as follows:

"It was a bitter age, coarse, heartless, with despair; science was asleep, scepticism, bigotry and superstition went side by side, pleasures were almost lewd and vulgar, idealism was almost eclipsed by materialism...

"Taste was at a low ebb and expressed itself in a profusion of gaudy, senseless ornament...

"Noblemen affected fine manners and a patronage of the arts, but the former were skin-deep and the latter founded on ignorance; nowhere was that truly civilized elegance which had flourished in Italy during the Renaissance, and which was being sedulously cultivated in eighteenth-century France--a country which the English nobleman unskillfully aped and at which the English commoner unskillfully mocked.

"Such as this world was, it offered rich and varied material to a satirist, to a student of manners, to one sensible to the violent, horrible and moving drama of humanity."<sup>3</sup>

And Hogarth was such a satirist who entered upon the scene. In addition to a sound artistic background, he had a sense of the dramatic, the horrible and the grotesque.

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Read, Art and Society, Macmillan Company, New York, 1937, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 177-178.

<sup>3</sup> Marjorie Bowen, William Hogarth, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., New York, London, 1937, pp. 29-30.

Probably the most widely known of his works is the series of six prints (after his paintings) entitled, Marriage-a-la-Mode. This series followed The Rake's Progress and Harlot's Progress. The objection was raised that the two Progresses "...were hardly suitable to adorn the boudoirs and closets of fashionable people, being altogether full of 'low life', and a good deal of not unnatural umbrage had been taken by those who had discovered their likeness in the plates."<sup>4</sup> As a result, he treated the high life in his Marriage-a-la-Mode, but not in a manner to please the aristocracy. The central theme is simple, the satire crude, and his victims have no chance of escaping their fate. "The object of his bitter ridicule, a marriage which is a bargain, a title being 'exchanged for money' is as old as civilization itself; such alliances are not hard to seek while wealth and titles are considered desirable in human society."<sup>5</sup> Though no such story as depicted actually occurred in real life, Bowen feels that "...he might have had in mind the divorce case of the Earl of Macclesfield and his Countess, who was afterwards Mrs. Brett and whose story was made so public by the complaints of her alleged son, Richard Savage."<sup>6</sup> Basically, this series is more of a satire on manners than on morals.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

Bowen is of the opinion that the moral content of Hogarth's work was probably sub-conscious, and that we should not take too seriously Hogarth's desire to improve the morals of his fellowmen.<sup>7</sup> The moral aspect of Hogarth's works provided a good selling point to the public. It is for the simple reason that the "moral" and the "story" were so fascinating to the public, which accounted for Hogarth's popularity with the people; but at the same time delayed the recognition of the work in the sphere of pure aesthetics.

Hogarth's works verge more on the brim of satire and humor than it does along "protest" lines. However, I feel that his works do have overtones of a "protest"--of a "protest" against the conditions of the society of his time. Yet by comparison, it will be seen that Marriage-a-la-Mode, for example, will not have the biting indictment of a work by Goya. Even though Hogarth is representing eighteenth century England, I am very much in accord with Bowen when she stated:

"Hogarth's world, then, is essentially a world that not only really existed, but that exists still; his characters are Mr. and Mrs.. Everybody; he shows us long-established vices and stupidities with which we are, at first hand, familiar. But because his people wear ancient costumes and are set in scenes strange to us, his work seems to show something remote, entirely out of harmony with ourselves. Again he shows the essence of life that we ourselves, involved in our individual hurries, cannot

perceive; an artist of his power could extract this essence from any age, and it would always seem terrible, touching the grotesque, for stripped truth is both terrible and grotesque."<sup>8</sup>

Hogarth's appeal is universal, and not limited to eighteenth century England. He really show us ourselves, the good and the bad. This was the beginning of great movements for the betterment of humanity which yet unnoticeable to the casual eye.

Let us turn next to a man of a century later who took a different approach in his "protest", Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), the first of the so-called modern primitives. Gauguin was a respectable businessman, a stock broker, a family man, and he would paint only on Sundays. When he was 35, he abandoned business, family, and security to take up painting. Not only is he one of the leading artists of the decorative school, but he "...is important also as a symbol of the disillusionment which spread through intellectual and artistic circles toward the end of the nineteenth century. Dismayed by the complexity and artificiality of civilization, he fled to the South Sea islands and spent the last decade of his life painting the hot and luscious colors of an unspoiled, primitive society."<sup>9</sup> (Though Gauguin made a theatrical gesture about abandoning a decadent civilization--he probably had some sincerity in

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<sup>8</sup>

Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>9</sup>

Edward McNall Burns, Western Civilizations, Their History and Their Cultures, W. W. Norton and Co., New York, 1949, p. 664.

purpose--yet, he also had some bills which were due as well as the fact that his erst-while friend, van Gogh, had made an attempt on his life).

Gauguin wanted to go where life was simple and primitive --away from a world infested with bourgeois imbeciles, and "'...far from this European struggle for money.'"<sup>10</sup> He had no love for sham and stupidity and the so-called bourgeois virtues, for he wanted to put behind him physical privation and senseless distractions which he felt came in the wake of that civilization.

It appears that Gauguin was successful in his escape, for at times, he found idyllic happiness in the islands. He had discovered the fresh and wholesome purity and silence, and he had found the poised order which he was seeking. This phase is summarized in his book, Noa-Noa, in which he tells of how the natives adopted him. He lived like the natives, ate with them, dressed like them, and unhopd-for peace filled his heart. "'...I begin to think quietly... to entertain but little hatred for other men; nay, to love them, I am in possession of every joy of life in freedom, animal and human. I have escaped from the false, and enter into Nature with the certainty that the morrow will be as to-day, as free and as fair; peace wells up in me; I am developing normally and am rid of empty cares.'"<sup>11</sup>

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Sheldon Cheney, The Story of Modern Art, The Viking Press, New York, 1947, p. 250.

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Robert Rey, Gauguin, Dodd, Mead and Co., New York, 1924, p. 37.

Instead of depicting cruel and biting satirical comment and "protest" about the ills of his society, Gauguin ran away from it and sought a society unmarred by the so-called civilized world. This was his "protest"--in trying to exemplify to others that the world in which they lived was a diseased one. He hated the hampering civilization and found his peace in the South Sea islands. When he was compelled to return to France, he left with many regrets, for "Yes, indeed, the savages have taught many things to an old man of an old civilization; these ignorant men have taught him much in the art of living and happiness."<sup>12</sup>

His works of this period have a warm cast throughout, reflecting the warmth of the islands. His emphasis was on the decorative aspect of art, and to portray the world in accordance with his own subjective feelings. They do not have the violence of a Goya, nor the satirical quality of a Hogarth or Daumier, and yet, if one considers the reason as to why Gauguin did seek the South Sea islands, then he can rightly be classified as among the "protest artists".

Georges Rouault (1871- ) is somewhat like Gauguin in his "protest" against the conditions existing in society today.<sup>13</sup> He stands as the solitary figure, a devout Catholic

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<sup>12</sup> Carl Zigrosser, The Book of Fine Prints, Crown Publishers, New York, 1937, 1948, p. 146

<sup>13</sup> In addition to the general condemnation of society, Rouault is known for his "protest" against war. This will be considered later in this thesis.

and a devotional painter in a period when many of the artists have run the gamut of anti-religious feeling. His approach in his "protest" is one of deep inner vision, and does not have the dramatic violence of a Goya. In speaking of Rouault, Cheney stated:

"Personally unworldly, and given to medieval ideas of withdrawal and of dedication to his craft, Rouault was known as 'The monk of modern painting.'" He took many episodes from the Bible for his themes, and "In this he was completing constructively a work he had begun long ago from the opposite approach, in criticism and exposure of the ills of modern civilization."<sup>15</sup>

To this great artist, what one senses was more important than what one sees; this was one of the teachings he retained from his own teacher, Moreau. His paintings and prints are those of expressionism, and yet an expressionism which is highly individual to Rouault. In his treatment of sad-faced clowns, they appear like melancholy witnesses of bourgeois corruption, and the clowns weep for humanity; they do not accuse.<sup>16</sup> Around 1907, he made a series of satirical painting of judges. Yet there is a deeper meaning behind the paintings, for "Judges were for him...symbols of bourgeois corruption, of justice become a travesty of itself through the callousness of the prosperous middle class."<sup>17</sup> Rouault

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<sup>15</sup> Sheldon Cheney, op. cit., p. 486.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 486.

<sup>16</sup> James Thrall Soby, Georges Rouault, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1945, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

spared nothing in his ridicule of bourgeoisie and its officialdom. He also executed a series with prostitutes as the dominant theme. And yet, "He drew on the houses of prostitution for subjects, not with Degas's or Lautrec's careful objectivity but in order to castigate prostituion."<sup>18</sup>

I feel that the works of Georges Rouault relative to the general theme of the ills of a civilization, are a "protest" against those things which he senses. In all his works, there is a pathetic feeling; no doubt arising out of his deep religious feeling. The method employed here is an implicit one, for the message element is subtly concealed behind the guises of clowns, judges, and prostitutes. The words which Rouault used in reference to that impassioned champion of the Middle Ages, Leon Bloy, may well apply to himself. They were, "'He vomits his epoch.'<sup>19</sup>

Leaving Europe, let us take a glance at the United States. In the 1930's, there were two trends in this country. The artists were becoming aware of some of the evils of the Industrial Age, and it was also the period of the Great Depression. One of the trends was that certain of the regional artists of the Middle West and elsewhere were revolting against the domination of the big cities, such as New York and Chicago. In their "protest", these

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<sup>18</sup>

Sheldon Cheney, op. cit., p. 319.

<sup>19</sup>

James Thrall Soby, op. cit., p. 5.

artists selected hitherto neglected material for pictorial use close to home. Thomas Benton, Steuart Curry, and Grant Wood were notable examples. Their "protest" was an implicit one, for instead of an open condemnation of an evil, they resorted to a more subtle approach. The other trend was the spread of social conscious art in the large cities during the Depression. However, when the conditions changed, only a relatively few were left. New creative approaches were being introduced in style, design, and technique. Max Weber, John Marin, and Stuart Davis are figures in this movement.

Notable among the more "pure" social protest artists" are William Gropper (1897- ) and Philip Evergood (1901- ). Gropper worked primarily in the lithographic medium, and is noted for his bitter political attacks. His early life was that of a struggling youth born on the lower east side of New York City, and who was working for six dollars a week at the age of fourteen. He also worked as a political cartoonist for the Tribune; however, he quit this paper to work for the Rebel Worker. In 1927, he made a trip to Russia, and has been called a Communist sympathizer. Mention is made of his political leanings since this is indicated in his humorous jabs at capitalism. For the Record, Plate I (page 39), is a stinging blow against the legislative system of our government. While the one man is talking with all the forcefulness and energy of his deep-felt (?) emotions, the others are lolling, reading, or doing anything but listen to the speaker. Another one of Gropper's works, The Senate,

was along the same satirical lines. Gropper had six one-man shows in New York between 1936-41, and "...showed himself a forceful commentator upon national life and political affairs, and at the same time a master of design."<sup>20</sup> "William Gropper is a positive person...He has always had a conscience and an inner necessity to use his art...to lampoon, point out, and dramatically satirize wrong--to make people aware of their heritage and the ever present dangers involved in preserving it. In many ways he's the nearest thing we've had to Daumier."<sup>21</sup> Gropper's message of "protest" is direct and explicit, and has a forcefulness which makes his work a powerful creation. However, to limit his "protest" to the United States Congress is to say only half of what can be said, for deeper than that, I feel that For the Record may easily be construed to be a "protest" against all forms of inefficiency and corruption within a governing political body.

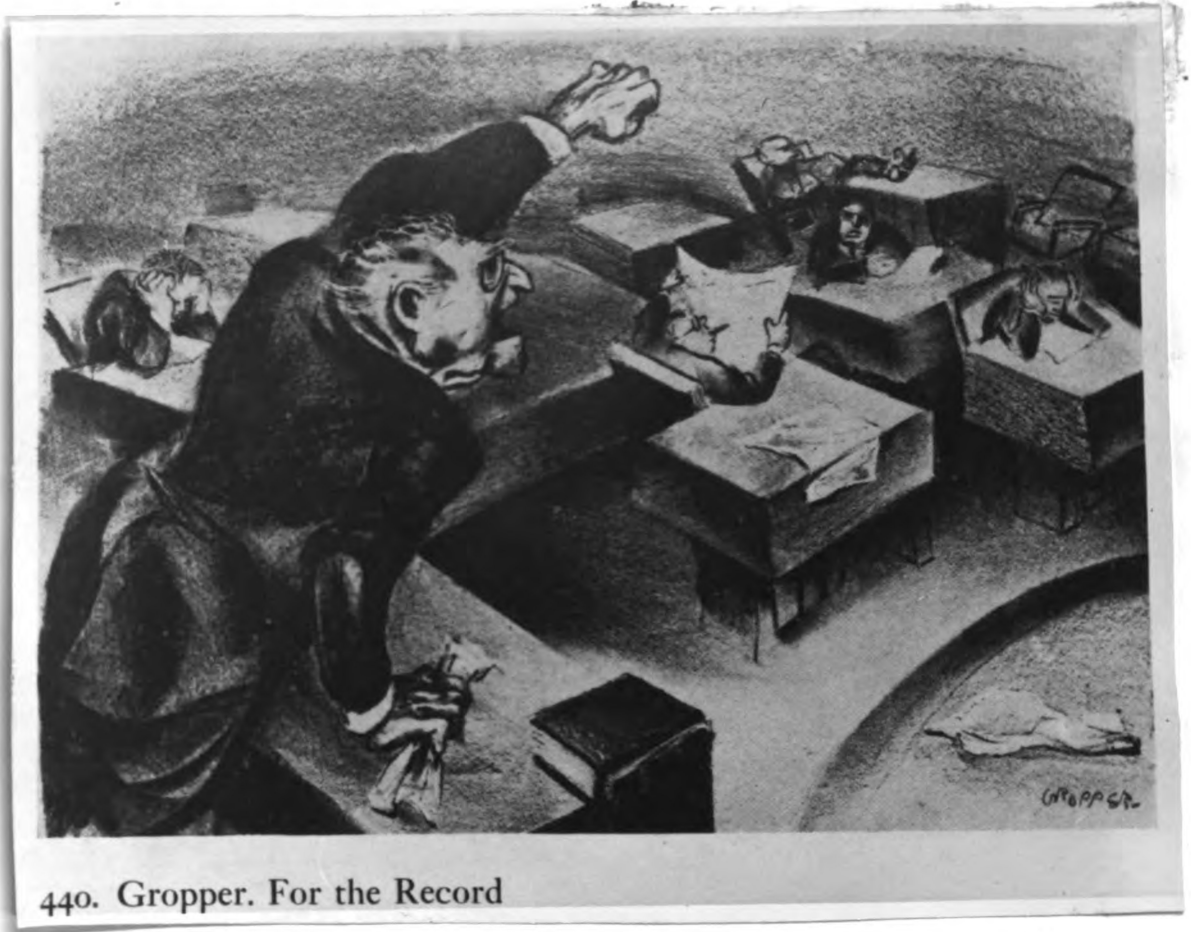
Evergood ranks second only to Gropper as a social message painter, Evergood was bitter in his condemnation of those who considered useful art a bad form of art, aesthetically speaking.<sup>22</sup> He felt that true realism and satire are useful in helping to accomplish betterment and change. "As a matter of pure fact all good art throughout the ages has been social art. And because good art of the past has

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<sup>20</sup> Sheldon Cheney, op. cit., p. 585.

<sup>21</sup> Jo Gibbs, "William Gropper, Protester in Paint," Art Digest, vol. 19, p. 15 (April 15, 1945).

<sup>22</sup> Philip Evergood, "Sure I'm a Social Painter", Magazine of Art, vol. 36., p. 251 (November, 1943).



440. Gropper. For the Record

PLATE I. Gropper. For the Record. Lithograph, 1936,  
11 1/2 x 13 3/4". Philadelphia Museum of Art.  
(From Carl Zigrosser, The Book of Fine Prints,  
Crown Publishers, New York, 1937, 1948, Plate 440).

has portrayed human beings and their habits, it has constituted the most pleasing record of the past that exists..."<sup>23</sup> His large oil painting Street Corner is more than a scene of workers and of lower classes. Evergood has so depicted the scene that we do have overtones of the stark comparison of the sordid conditions which exist even in the modern twentieth century. His message is that of awakening the people to the realization that we do have the struggling lower classes who know not the comforts and luxuries of the so-called "average American". I agree with the statement made by this artist that "The greatest art is the result of human experience--a searching for the big truth but not being enslaved by its petty details."<sup>24</sup>

Reginald Marsh (1898- ), Grant Wood (1892- ), and George Bellows (1882-1925) are other American artists who have made contributions in this field. The message of these artists was not as open and explicit as some of the others, while Gropper and Evergood specialized in this social conscious type of art. Marsh falls into the classification of the "Urban Scene Painters" of the 1930's, and he depicted many scenes of city life--in an almost lurid way, and yet there does exist a certain element of social criticism. Coney Island and Harlem were his favorite subjects. In his Twenty-Cent Movie and his mural works, we see evidences

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 258.



of "protest" against the squalid conditions of the unfortunate segment of our population. Of Marsh's works, Cheney stated that "His record of burlesque strip-teasers and their audiences, of beach parties at Coney Island, and of the Negro steppers of Harlem were interesting as social documents, if often disturbingly gross and faintly obscene."<sup>25</sup>

Grant Wood's Daughters of The American Revolution was the result of his personal experience. Because he had gone to Germany for inspiration for a design for a stained-glass window commemorating the dead of World War I, he was severely criticized by the Daughters of the American Revolution. In turn, Wood painted this stinging work, in which he is criticizing a certain aspect of society--those who make certain claims and do just the opposite. This work verges on the rim of satire of the snobbish element of society.

Though he is best known for his athletic paintings, Bellows executed two works in the realm of "social protest" art. He also worked in "protest" against war, which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. Primarily a draughtsman, it is said that he was perhaps most happy as a lithographer. In his The Law is Too Slow, he showed the "...most starkly realistic indictment of lynching to come from any lithographic stone."<sup>26</sup> He was not a reform artist, and yet he was sensitive enough to recognize the social obliga-

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<sup>25</sup>

Sheldon Cheney, op. cit., p. 580

<sup>26</sup>

Peyton Boswell, Jr., George Bellows, Crown Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 23.

tions of the artist. His painting, River Front Number 2, also displays a tendency towards social criticism. Here we have a scene depicting the "ol' swimming hole" for those who live in the cities--a swimming hole with filth and crowded conditions. It was implied criticism in this particular case, and during the 1930's, the W. P. A. constructed a number of swimming pools.

The Mexican artists Diego Rivera (1886- ) and José Clement Orozco (1883- ) have made the Mexican School one of the vital ones of our day. The keynote of this School is humanity, and their art is primarily a social one. The struggling peon was glorified, and the capitalist was subject to satire. The aim of these men was to depict the social conditions of the modern world and to present the hopes and struggles of the toilers. Thus, the art was in defiance of the bourgeois, and "...by working for one's own conscience and approval of one's fellow artist, that the painters could preserve their integrity."<sup>27</sup> In Mexican art, murals have had and do have an important function. As in the Middle Ages where the sculpture on the cathedrals served as the Bible for the mass who were unable to read, murals are for the Mexicans, as the mass is unable to own books or even paper. "What writing is to those who read," Gregory the Great wrote in the Sixth Century to the Bishop of Marseilles, 'that a picture is to those who have only eyes...for the people especially, pictures stand in the

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<sup>27</sup> Bertram D. Wolfe, Diego Rivera, American Union, Washington D.C., 1947, p. 4.

place of literature.'"<sup>28</sup> This statement in the sixth century still is applicable to the impoverished mass in Mexico.

Rivera reflects not only the social currents of his country and his time, but also the aesthetic. The very manner of painting of subject matter was a form of "protest" for Rivera. Art was now meant to be for the people instead of the bourgeois middle class. Wolfe stated that, "One of the great services of the Mexican Revolution to the painters was to break through the vicious circle of private patronage. 'I was sick of painting for the bourgeois,' Diego told me in 1923, 'The middle class has no taste, least of all the Mexican middle class...Rare indeed was the sitter who would consent to my painting him as I saw him...Even from the standpoint of art alone, it was necessary to find some way of painting for the people.'"<sup>29</sup>

The works of Orozco depict more of the brutal savagery of man in his struggle to survive. He feels that he must also reveal the falsity and evil he meets in complex forms about him. Fernandez was high in his estimation of the man Orozco, when he stated, "I feel that Orozco is one of the finest characters in the world today; his art reflects man's sacrifice in order to realize new ideals in the midst of a passionate and corrupt world."<sup>30</sup> Orozco completed

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Bertram D. Wolfe, Diego Rivera, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, London, 1939, p. 160.

<sup>30</sup> José Clemente Orozco, Text by Justino Fernandez, Mexico, 1944, Intro. Eugene Fischgrund.

mural works at Pomona College, Dartmouth College, and the New School for Social Research in New York City, and all his works are socially significant. "The barbarities of war, socialistic propaganda, satire of the rich and the pretentious, pity for the poor and the exploited: all this enters into the picturing of this typically Mexican painter, and he matches the importance, the compulsion of his thematic material with a pictorial power, a plastic competence, equal to that of the overseas leaders of the modern movement."<sup>31</sup>

It is apparent that these two notable artists do take on certain ideological tendencies as reflected in their art. Both Orozco and Rivera certainly had close association-ship with the Communist party--though Rivera later resigned from the Party. The struggle of the masses and the upholding of the proletariat, the theme of the rebirth of a new world under new ideals--such was the communistic invasion. Nevertheless one must admit that, "One distinction of the Mexicans is that they have had something to say. They have proven the adaptability of a simplified, form-enriched method to themes of magnitude and profundity."<sup>32</sup> However, I believe that the Mexican art is more of reform than "protest art", and is influenced by the teachings of communism. In some respects, a tinge of the propaganda

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<sup>31</sup> Sheldon Cheney, op. cit., p. 556.  
<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 556.

element seems to creep in, rather than a sincere "protest" on the part of the artist.

It has been illustrated that the artists were sensitive to those deplorable conditions, and spoke up in their medium --that is, in terms of paintings and prints. They had a message to give to the people, and they "protested" either in the subtle implicit method or the more direct and open explicit means. The Industrial Revolution certainly has proven beneficial for the welfare of the people, and yet, there were those evils introduced by the Machine Age. The struggle for materialism, wealth, and the abandonment of the spiritual--these were some of the ills about which the artist "protested"; he wanted to wake up the "mercenary-doped" public. In the final analysis, the ultimate aim was for a happier and better world here on earth--a search for that Earthly Paradise. The means to attain that end is not of consequence here--what is more important is how the artists "protested" against the glaring weaknesses of a society and a civilization.

## INJUSTICE AND CORRUPTION

Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) stands out as the great figure among those artists who "protested" against injustice and corruption. Daumier was indeed versatile, for he was capable of dealing in different kinds of subject matter, and because I will deal with him only in connection with injustice does not mean to imply that this was his only subject. Primarily a journalist who drew caricatures and cartoons, Daumier, nevertheless gained due recognition for his mastery because of the eternal universal quality of his lithographs. When one considers that Daumier turned out about four thousand lithographs in his lifetime, and even turning out four in one night, then it is more amazing that one man was able to instill such a universal appeal in those works. He would draw lithographs simply because he had to have an income, but deep within him was the one intense desire to paint.

Millet and Daumier were the first painters to dedicate themselves wholly to contemporary or "common" themes of nineteenth century France. Though Millet's works tended towards portrayal, he so suggested a sense of his brotherhood with the struggles of the humble toilers, that the world was stirred to sympathy. However, Daumier "...was a trained social commentator, a cartoonist by trade, and he

carried over to his painting his interest in the contemporary scene, and at times his barbed criticism and satire... and he caricatured the predatory lawyers and corrupt courts so subtly that his paintings rouse ultimate anger over official injustice."<sup>1</sup> In his early youth, he had worked in the court as an usher and errand boy to a bailiff of the courts, and as a result, was familiar with the ways of the courts. Later in 1831, he joined the staff of La Caricature where he drew biting cartoons of the political machine taking bribes at one end and discharging decorations, commissions and favors at the other. On one occasion, he had to spend six months in jail because of his condemning political works. Daumier's satire spared no class, and least of all the bourgeois. "He ridiculed the corruption of petty officials, the pompous blundering of lawyers and judges, and the hypocritical piety of the rich."<sup>2</sup> As it was with Hogarth, to Daumier, moralism was a way out of intolerable dilemma of the artist in a capitalistic epoch.

The creation of the illustrated paper and the improvement of the techniques in lithography, afforded Daumier an excellent opportunity to burst forth with his deep-felt "protests". The medium lent itself to the rapidity of

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Sheldon Cheney, The Story of Modern Art, The Viking Press, New York, 1947, p. 101.

2

Edward McNall Burns, Western Civilizations, Their History and Their Cultures, W.W.Norton and Co., New York, 1949, p. 662.

conception which demanded rapidity of execution--and Daumier ably fitted this role. Lithography was used mostly for commercial purposes in the nineteenth century, except for Goya and Daumier, and these men used it as a medium of great power.

Some thirty years after his imprisonment for creating a bitter caricature of Louis Philippe, Daumier drew his series of the Gens de Justice. This series no doubt reflected his earlier imprisonment which gave him a lifelong hatred for the men of the courts. Daumier drew many lithographs and treated a variety of subjects, and thus it is hardly fair to a genius as this man, to omit many of his great works. However, instead of the more apparent "protests" as in his Gens de Justice series, I felt that his Rue Transnonain, le 15 avril, 1834, Plate II (page 49), serves as an excellent example of his "protest" against injustice.

In the book, H. Daumier, Interpreter of History, the author Ghirardelli, has gone to a great deal of research and study correlating Daumier's works with his time. The prints are discussed in detail, and this book is heavily documented. Rue Transnonain, le 15 avril, 1834 is among the selected works, and I have drawn heavily upon this source for the factual information involved. All we see in this print through the visual eye, are three adults and child, all dead and spots of blood are on the floor. The



PLATE II. Daumier. Rue Transnonain, le 15 avril, 1834. Lithograph, 1834, 11 1/4 x 17 3/8", Collection Fiske Kimball. (from Ynez Ghirardelli, H. Daumier, Interpreter of History The Grubhorn Press, San Francisco, 1940, Plate II).

furniture indicates that a struggle had taken place. The large white central figure of the man lying lifeless on top of the child is contrasted sharply with the grayer and darker areas around this figure. From this contrast, one gets a feeling of the dramatic, and also the feeling of the brokenness of the body as it lies inert slumped against the bed. The event depicted was an episode of minor importance, but this Plate is "...remembered today chiefly because he immortalized the tragic scene with his great plastic power."<sup>3</sup>

In order to fully understand the deep-felt "protest" behind this Plate, it is necessary to know a little about the historical setting. The scene itself depicted the massacre in the Rue Transnonain, which was the episode which closed the series of attempted insurrections in France. The Republicans who had been beaten in June, 1832, carried out these insurrections, as a part of their revenge program. The Rights of Man was the newly formed Republican society with more positive demands such as universal suffrage, the jury system, and emancipation of the working class. In April, 1834, the bourgeoisie, alarmed by the manifesto of The Rights of Man, retaliated with a repressive law. This "...forbade associations divided into sections of less than twenty persons (The Rights of Man was divided into sections of twenty persons to evade a previous law which forbade

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Ynez Ghiradelli, H. Daumier, Interpreter of History, Grabhorn Press, San Francisco, 1940, p. 29.

associations of more than twenty persons) and referred infringements to courts of summary jurisdiction instead of trial by jury."<sup>4</sup> In retaliation to this suspension of liberty, the Republicans came through with a suspension of law and order. By April twelfth, order was restored in Lyons, but on the following day, barricades (after a signal from The Rights of Man) were erected in the Quartier du Marais, Paris. The bourgeois government had dispersed those insurgents, when a rumor was circulated that at No. 12 Rue Transnonain, some Republicans were firing on the troops. Government troops forced their way into the house and massacred the inmates in blind fury. "Sixteen innocent victims sacrificed in a few minutes--sixteen deliberate and cruel assassinations--such were the first effects of the methods adopted for putting down the insurrection."<sup>5</sup> This, then, was the setting for Rue Transnonain, le 15 avril, 1834.

Facts collected by the brother of one of the victims--descriptions by eye-witnesses--and recorded in a memorial remain as mute testimony to that massacre. Ghirardelli included one in his book, and excerpts from it will be sufficient to explain the event immortalized by Daumier.

"...The evening before there were sixteen men and women assembled in the room...We had retired there when the insurgents threatened to break into the house, for it was them we were afraid of: we little thought we should have any reason to dread the military, We

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 29.  
<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

were crowded together...there were still thirteen of us there when the troops tried to break down the door..Madame Godefroy...had an infant...in her arms...my husband...held an infant...said my husband; 'let these gentlemen see' (and he held the child forward) 'We are here, you see, with our family, my friends, my brothers! We are all peaceable mothers and fathers of families...M. Hu, mortally wounded, fell with his son under him, the child had its arm broken with a ball...twenty-two bayonet wounds...M. Thierry was killed... then they perceived M. Bonton...As they had no musket loaded, they ran him through with their bayonets. His cries were such that I seem to hear them now..."<sup>6</sup>

Even though the scene is a specific one, and Daumier immortalized the scene with this print, deeper than what is obvious, there is universal condemnation of injustice. The ruthlessness of those in power without heed for the individual is a "protest" against injustice. The human soul--the individual--means nothing to those who seek power and greed. Whether we look at this print today or fifty years from today, I believe that its message is an eternal one. What price the individual self? Nothing. The methods of injustice are clear...

Jean Louis Forain (1852-1931) was another man who had a stubborn sense of social injustice like Daumier. However, I feel that his works have a certain religious compassion even in his satires. He has a strong sense of humanity which stirs his artistic emotion. He was a master-etcher and a very able draughtsman. While we may read Hogarth's prints, we feel Forain's etchings.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Modern Masters of Etching, J.L.Forain, The Studio London, 1925, p. 4.

More than a sense of "protest", one gathers a wide-reaching sympathetic outlook from his work such as Apres la Saisie. In this print, we have "...a poverty-stricken family turned out of such home as they had, the woman striding along with her two little children, the man slouching after them; a bleak scene, but with pity eloquent in the very simplicity of the etcher's expression."<sup>8</sup> The innocent questioning glances of the two children--innocent victims of the heartlessness of a society, or possibly the inadequacy of the father. And yet, one cannot help but feel that the father and mother have tried every conceivable means to retain their home, but to of no avail. What is this a "protest" against? A "protest" against the modern civilization which is full of injustices--injustices to the innocent children who have to suffer and know not why. This may well be a stark testimonial to the fact that we today are losing the value of human significance.<sup>9</sup>

George Bellows executed a painting (also a lithograph after the painting) which he entitled, Edith Cavell. The painting is done in nocturnal greens, blacks, and yellow lights. Simply by looking at this work, one may find it difficult to see the element of "protest" against injustice.

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<sup>8</sup>

Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>

The many "No Children" signs in apartments-for-rent today may serve as a comparable situation of "protest".

Once again, this is a specific episode, and yet, there does exist that intangible element of universality and lastingness. The scene is one in which we see a Red Cross nurse coming down the steps into a dungeon in which there are many soldiers. Some are wounded and helpless, while a few struggle meekly to stand and greet this nurse.

Edith Cavell was the British Red Cross nurse who was the greatest heroine in the fight to preserve democracy in World War I. She had aided wounded English, French, and Belgian soldiers to escape during the German occupation of Belgium. She was caught and sentenced to die before the firing squad--even though she had cared for many wounded Germans. Despite appeals from all over the world to stay the sentence, she was executed before a firing squad on October 12, 1915. The calm dignity of her last words can still be heard: "Patriotism is not enough."<sup>10</sup> This is not an idealized scene--instead it is striking in its tragic appeal. This work by Bellows may well be interpreted to be a "protest" against war and all the evils accompanying it; but once again, this is a "protest" against injustice to the value of individual worth. Technically, she was guilty in aiding the enemy, and yet, was she guilty when she tended the wounded regardless of nationality? When so little value is placed on the individual, then I feel that degradation of a civilization is making itself felt.

Ben Shahn (1898- ), a contemporary American artist, made a series of twenty-one paintings on the Sacco-Vanzetti trial theme. The story is simple--two Italian immigrants are unjustly accused, and are sentenced to be electrocuted for a crime they did not commit. The lack of knowledge of the English language was a strike against the defenders before they even took their stand. At this time, feeling was none too friendly towards the Italian immigrants, and this was another strike against them. They were electrocuted in 1927 despite all the demonstrations all over the world against the injustice. In this series, he painted Sacco and Vanzetti quite simply, but with a great deal of attention to the facial features. Not only the outward characteristics, but more of the inward features--of how these men felt. Shahn specializes in the intense study of the tensions which may exist over a person's face which has its roots within the heart of the individual. Both Sacco and Vanzetti are calm, and are kindly-faced--nothing of the despair or anxiety. In many ways, the paintings are like true crucifixions. Again, a "protest" against the injustice of the law courts--of how a man's life can be so easily snuffed out strictly on the basis of evidence. How much value is attached to the life of man?

In the murals in the Supreme Court Building of Mexico City, José Clemente Orozco added his bitter "protest" against

the judicial system with all its laxities. We have justice lolling, snoring with his mouth agape. "...his painting is more disquieting than the ancient ones (the Flemish works), being a sweeping indictment of all human justice rather than a single scoundrel. To the doubtful enjoyment of Mexican judges, who must pass the murals every day on their way to work, Orozco chose literally to broil human lawmakers and justice dispensers on a set of divine spits."<sup>11</sup> The Justices of the courts would be very happy to see this work erased, and yet it still remains as a mute "protest" against the injustice of the so-called courts of justice.

From this survey dealing with those "protests" against injustice and corruption within a political system, can we not deduce that the artists were quick to point out the injustices and tried to convey this idea to the public? Yet the injustices were those which, though they had their immediate origin in a particular time and place, nevertheless, took on certain aspects of universality. It is this element of an universal appeal--to all men regardless of color or creed--which makes the mass of humanity become more aware of the worth of the individual self. The injustice is not limited to a wrong in the legal sense, but an injustice to mankind. The artists themselves certainly must have felt deeply about the wrongs in order to successfully portray

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Jean Charlot, "José Clemente Orozco," Magazine of Art, vol. 40, p. 259 (November, 1947).

that theme to the people. This "protest" is only one of the many in the struggle to make this world a better place in which to live. Man lives with his brothers, and an injustice to one is an injustice to all.

## WAR

The "protest" against war has been a long one, and in the face of the threat of another war, may we not take stock of ourselves again to see who "wins" in a war. Destruction of men, pillaging, ruin, devastation-- all follow in the wake of a war--a war which usually has its roots in economic sources or in the greed of a few in power. Many are the "protests" heard today against war, and yet in Korea today, we have blood being spilled after only five years since the end of World War II. Patriotism and loyalty to nation? Yes, but deeper than simply nationalistic feelings, what about the Brotherhood of Man? When one can objectively imagine that if the time, money, and efforts which are directed towards destructive ends could be directed to constructive ends, would we not be taking a step in the right direction towards the attainment of this Earthly Paradise?

Jacques Callot (1593/4-1635) was among the first to depict his "protest" against war. He used the etching medium, and though his series of the Greater and Lesser Miseries of War are small (about 3 1/4" x 7 3/8"), they are shown in complete details. Callot was born in the province of Lorraine in France, and was born into a historical setting which was full of Reformation troubles

and of ravaging civil wars between the provinces. He had seen the barbarity of warfare in general, and of the senseless brutality of religious warfare in particular. The historical background for his particular series of "protest" against war is laid in the French invasion of Lorraine, and of the meaninglessness of treaties signed for purposes of maintaining peace. When Lorraine was finally taken by the French, Callot was commissioned by Louis XIII to do two works depicting the conquest of L'Île de Re and La Rochelle. Later, however, when he was asked to execute an etching commemorating his own country's humiliation, he made his famous reply: "Sire, je suis Lorrain et je crois ne devoir rien faire contre l'honneur de mon pays." Callot was a man as well as an artist.

Callot was an etcher of the actual world--there was very little moralizing, and he did not reveal his own feelings. The works are detailed, and show the detachment with which Callot approached his work. There is beauty of design and aesthetic qualities, and this series has often been described as a "...ballet of horror and death."<sup>1</sup> The scenes themselves are kaleidoscopic views of unfettered bestiality, of pillaging, raping of nuns, plundering of convents, and of battlefields strewn with entangled masses of dead soldier and of wounded horses.

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<sup>1</sup> F. D. Klingender, "Les Miseres et Malheurs de La Guerre, " Burlington Magazine, vol. 81, p. 206 (August, 1942).

Though Callot's works do not have the dynamic forcefulness of some of the other artists who "protested" against war, yet, I feel that his works do have more depth than what may be apparent at first glance. They show the horrors endured by the common people in a war conducted in the interest of princes. By implication, these prints show the suffering of the civil population whose lost it was to "feed the war."<sup>2</sup> Kup has felt too that Callot's works are more than illustrational when he stated, "With an accusing (my italics) hand Callot depicts the plundering of French armies in Northern Italy, the burning and raping of Swedes in the towns and villages of war-torn Central Europe."<sup>3</sup> The Miseres de La Guerre has also been called the pictorial "All Quiet on the Western Front" of the Thirty Years War.

The spirit of Callot's war prints was adequately described by Klingender. He referred to Voltaire's Candide in which the following excerpt describes an Arabian village which the Bulgars had burned according to the laws of Public Right.

"...Here old men riddled with blows watched their wives dying, with their throats cut, their infants clasped to their bleeding bosoms; their disemboweled girls, having assuaged the carnal needs of various heroes, were giving up their last breath; others who had been half burnt cried out for someone to finish them off; brains were spread out on the ground

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<sup>2</sup>

Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>3</sup>

Karl Kup, "Prints," American Artist, vol. 11, p. 30 (January, 1947).

along with cut off arms and legs.

"Candide fled to another village; it belonged to the Bulgars, and the Arabian heroes had treated it in the same way..."<sup>4</sup>

Callot's "protest"? Against the cruelty and brutality of war because it is the civilian population which suffers-- the first direct cry heard against war in Western Art.

The French occupation of France from 1808-1814, provided the material for Francisco Goya's biting indictment of war in his series of Desastres de la Guerra. These are mainly etchings, while some are in combination with aqua-tint; and these were etched intermittently between 1810 and 1820. (However they were not published until 1863). The French occupation disrupted Spanish life, and though many (Goya probably included) were sympathetic with French ideals of liberty at the beginning, the cruel and useless crimes on the part of the invaders quickly unified the Spaniards in "protest". France had really started the Spanish war of independence, for the Spaniards were fighting in opposition to domination by the invader. H. D. W. in the Bulletin of the Milwaukee Art Institute, summed up the setting for Goya's works.

"Butchery, mutilation, famine and rape stalking through Spanish history, left a gory trail in the turbulent years when the puppet Joseph Bonaparte tottered on an almost mythical Spanish throne...Complaisant Charles IV, in a French provincial village, surrendered Spain to the Corsican emperor, and trailed Godoy, the Prince

of Peace, and Maria Louisa, their common Queen into obscurity. From the abdication in 1808 to the short-lived restoration in 1813, Spain was a torchlit panorama of pillage and carnage."<sup>6</sup>

Y no Hay Remedio, Plate III (page 63), has been selected as an example of Goya's "protest" against war. We have here all the bloody, brutal aspects of war as men are being shot as they are bound to a stake--shot from the gun of the "invaders". In his work on the Desastres, Goya was careful not to designate which country was the invader, since he was more concerned with the inhumanity of war. Both the French and the Spaniards were guilty of brutality and disregard for humanity. He would generalize from specific incidents, so that his works take on a symbolic aspect in "protest". Mayor stated that, "Above all Goya introduces us to the realities of the 'small incidents' of war. The horrors which he depicts here are more dreadful than the big battles."<sup>7</sup> Goya never depicted battles nor masses of troops--his concern was with the war as it affected the civilian population. "All he shows us is war's disasters and squalor, without any of the glory or even picturesqueness."<sup>8</sup>

Goya's message of "protest" was of eternally saying to

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<sup>6</sup> "Goya's Bitter Heritage," Art Digest, vol. 11, p. 17 (February 15, 1937).

<sup>7</sup> A. H. Mayor, "Goya's Disasters of War," American Magazine of Art, vol. 29, p. 710 (November, 1936).

<sup>8</sup> The Complete Etchings of Goya, Crown Publishers, New York, 1943, p. 13



*Y no hai remedio.*

PLATE III. Goya. Y No Hay Remedio. Etching from Los Desastres de la Guerra, 1810-1821, 5 1/4 x 7 1/2", Metropolitan Museum of Art. (From The Complete Etchings of Goya, Crown Publishers, New York, 1943).

men that they stop being barbarians. Wars were the result of man's absurdities, for not only do people suffer during the period of actual war, but famine, hunger, and hopelessness follow in its wake. In comparison with the work by Callot, Goya lent a terrifying atmosphere to his work, and depicted the utter brutality of men against men. Goya himself never intended that his work be utilized as propaganda --nowhere does he imply the message "Let there be no more such wars." Goya is not interested in uniforms or parties, but with men and women. However, I feel that one cannot help but shrink and cringe at the utter brutality and bloodiness of war, and it seems that his Desastres may prove to be an effective weapon in the hands of a pacifist group. "The Desastres are a dance of death. In times of peace they seem stark and magnificent art. In times of war they are recalled again as the most brilliant timeless picture of war's dark backwash any man has ever drawn."<sup>8</sup>

It was after World War I, that we had the emergence of another "protest" artist, but this time from an entirely different approach. Kaethe Kollwitz (1867-1945) grew up in an atmosphere of intense religious feeling, philosophical speculation, revolutionary thought, and social and moral idealism. The period of 1894-1898 was one of intense creative activity for Kollwitz, and this was when she received recognition at the Berlin Art Exhibition (1898) on

her series of six prints, The Weavers. These prints depicted the plight of the Silesian weavers (adapted from Gerhart Hauptmann's play, The Weavers) who earned their living with hand looms. "It was a landmark of class-conscious art: for almost the first time the plight of the worker and his age-long struggle to better his position received sympathetic treatment in picture."<sup>10</sup> When the jury recommended The Weavers for a gold medal, the honor was vetoed by the Emperor. He was opposed to all art of social content: "gutter art (Rinnsteinkunst) was what he called it."<sup>11</sup> The Peasant War series soon followed, and this dealt with the exploitation of peasantry, the revolt, and the savage brutality on both sides.

The period of World War I affected Kollwitz adversely. Not only was there very little in terms of production, but she also suffered a personal loss. Her younger son had volunteered, and was killed in Flanders. The years after 1919 were marked by another intense creative period during which she treated war themes, and her "protest" against wars. She worked in several mediums, and finally felt that the woodcut medium would serve her purpose the most satisfactorily in her war themes. However, one lithograph, Killed in Action, Plate IV (page 66), has a stirring message in her "protest" against war. A mother covers her face in

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<sup>10</sup> Carl Zigrosser, Kaethe Kollwitz, H. Bittner and Company, New York, 1946, p. 8

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 8.



38 KILLED IN ACTION

Lithograph 1921

PLATE IV. Kollwitz. Killed in Action. Lithograph, 1921  
16 1/8 x 15", Collection Erich Cohn.  
(From Carl Zigrosser, Käthe Kollwitz, H. Bittner  
and Company, New York, 1946, Plate 38).

anguish when she discovers that her husband has been killed in action. The innocent questioning faces of her children know not the full significance of her plight and loss, and no doubt are clamoring and wondering why their mother is crying. A timeless "protest", and I feel that the artist has effectively portrayed her mute "protest" against the cost of war in terms of the loss of loved ones. In Killed in Action, one cannot help but feel the strong inner experience, for Kaethe Kollwitz knew the pangs of sorrow through the loss of her son. Her emphasis in this type of art is on the reaction of woman to war--as a wife, and as a mother; in woman, she saw "...woman as (a) creator, Mater-Genetrix, begetter of the human race, link between past and future. In the person of the mother, the artist voiced her faith that the people will carry on."<sup>12</sup>

One of the seven woodcuts in the series dealing with war, The Parents, which depicted resignation, is indeed another mute "protest" against the toll of war. Both mother and father are kneeling, embracing one another, while the mother buries her face in the father's arms; he covers his face with his other hand. Nothing melodramatic, but dramatic with strong emotional overtones. The reactions of the characters are innately felt and psychologically true.

Of Kollwitz, Zigrosser stated that "She had the gift

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<sup>12</sup>

Ibid., p. 14.

of generalizing from the particular into the universal..."<sup>13</sup>  
This is what makes her works timeless. "The ethic of her social conscience was a personal evaluation of right and wrong and not a tactic of organized mass movements..."<sup>14</sup>  
Kaethe Kollwitz did not stress the savage brutal aspect of war, but instead looked at war through the eyes of a woman and of Humanity.

Another German-born artist (now a naturalized American citizen), "protested" against war, and like Kollwitz, drew upon his own experience to mirror his "protest". George Grosz (1893- ) served for four years as a foot soldier in the Kaiser's army in World War I, (and hated war and regimentation), and the vivid memory of the ruthless savagery of war left its imprint. He was hospitalized at one time, and he would sketch as a means of an outlet for his pent-up emotions. "Everything I disliked in my environment I would sketch in my notebook or on sheets of writing paper...bestly faces of my comrades, war cripples, arrogant officers, embittered nurses...They just represented the ugliness and distortions I saw all about me."<sup>15</sup>  
Much of Grosz's art was devoted to post-war Germany, and he lashed out at those who exploited German wretchedness. "War, to Grosz, is the greatest sin of all, so far exceeding the lust, gluttony, envy, and sloth that have also character-

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> George Grosz, A Little Yes and A Big No, The Dial Press, New York, 1946, p. 161.

ized his subjects that a kind of fever comes over him when he approaches it."<sup>16</sup>

A Piece of My World is a painting by Grosz which shows tattered, festering soldier-scorpions tramping through a rat-infested landscape. Hopelessness and misery are clearly reflected here; the aftermath of war. In his treatment of a painting, he dealt in details and exactness. He defended his style and his preoccupation with death and the macabre, when he stated, "...But in contrast to the expressionists, I try to recreate my world as realistically as possible. Over and over again I say to myself: Be more exact...more exact... because the more of a nightmare it is, the more I must recreate it in an understandable way..."<sup>17</sup> This is certainly an explicit approach, and it is not difficult for the onlooker to see that the artist was bringing out the sordid destitution of those who were left in post-war Germany. Commenting on the works of Grosz, the Chicago Art Institute Bulletin stated, "...Grosz was depicting the corrupt life of Berlin during the war and in the dreadful years after, and that the sordidness he set down lay in society of that time and not in his art..."<sup>18</sup>

In his "protest" against war, George Grosz laid bare the tragic conditions which follow in its wake, and these

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<sup>16</sup> "Spotlight On:" Art News, vol. 45, p. 50 (October, 1946)  
<sup>17</sup> Ben Wolf, "Grosz Shocks a World Toward Peace."  
Art Digest, vol. 21, p. 12 (October 15, 1946).  
<sup>18</sup> "Grosz Rated with Hogarth and Daumier," Art Digest,  
vol. 13, p. 12 (January 1, 1939).

were vividly portrayed, for he knew of these from his own life's experience. The appalling misery is one that will be hard to forget. His "protest" may well be seen in the words he uttered when the war finally was over. "I was disappointed, not because the war was lost, but because the people had tolerated it and suffered it for so long a time, refusing to follow the few voices that were raised against the mass slaughter."<sup>19</sup> I feel that today, we may well take stock of those words before we plunge into World War III. Grosz mercilessly ridiculed the bourgeoisie and the officers--all arising out of his own hatred. In the words of Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "...Here is satire without laughter, without wit, but with a sense of moral outrage against human ugliness and vice which remind one of Jonathan Swift in its morbid intensity."<sup>20</sup>

On April 28, 1937, the Basque town of Guernica was reported destroyed by German bombing planes flying for General Franco in the Spanish Civil War. This unprotected town was pulverized, and thousands of helpless citizens were destroyed--simply as a test of the effectiveness of the German war planes. Three days later, Pablo Picasso (1881- ), one of the giants of contemporary art, began the work on his Guernica, Plate V (page 71). Picasso clearly indicated his position when he made a statement

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George Grosz, op. cit., p. 161.

"George Grosz from War to War," Art Digest, vol. 16, p. 9 (October 15, 1941).



PLATE V. Picasso. Guernica. Oil on canvas, 1937, 11' 6" x 25' x 8".  
Owned by artist.  
(From Picasso, Forty Years of His Art, Museum of Modern  
Art, New York, 1939, Plate 280, page 174).

at the time he began his painting. He stated:

"The Spanish struggle is the fight of reaction against the people, against freedom. My whole life as an artist has been nothing more than a continuous struggle against reaction and death of art. How could anybody think for a moment that I could be in agreement with reaction and death? When the rebellion began, the legally elected and democratic republican government of Spain appointed me director of the Prado Museum, a post which I immediately accepted. In the panel on which I am working, which I shall call Guernica, and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death..."<sup>21</sup>

"His theme is the holocaust of war, the calculating frightfulness that descended upon a Spanish town and upon the world. A woman falls from a burning building...a dead warrior lies dismembered...a bull symbolic of death witnesses this triumph of death. It is doubtful if any man but a spiritual descendant of El Greco and Goya could have conceived so appalling a symbol of human fury... incisive and universal...picture of the world's agony."<sup>22</sup> Picasso used only blacks, whites, and grays, and this added much to the effectiveness of the scene of death. His abstract approach was one away from the traditional concrete, and this painting is filled with implications. It expressed indignation and the context of the historical situation was one which was to produce gas chambers and concentration camps.

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<sup>21</sup> Juan Larrea, Guernica-Picasso, Curt Valentin, New York, 1947, p. 12.  
<sup>22</sup> David M. Robb and J.J. Garrison, Art in the Western World, Harper and Brothers, New York, London, 1935, 1942, p. 819.

In order to understand this painting, one must realize that "...the reality conveyed by the Guernica is not physical but a mental reality, alike in this to language and writing."<sup>23</sup> It is mainly a mental thing, and is full of symbolism. The weeping mother on the left is Mater Dolorosa calling down justice from heaven, and the dead child on the left is symbolic of hope for the future of the world--that is, jeopardizing all hope for future of the world. Picasso began with a particular and expanded it to a universal thing.

Juan Larrea made some interesting comments on the Guernica.<sup>24</sup> As in many of Picasso's works, the characters have two dimensions or faces. One is addressed to the onlooker, appealing to the moral sensitiveness, and trying to overwhelm him through the fury and horror coming from the composition. It is a scene of maddening fright. The other face speaks to the imagination in its own language. Guernica meant to seize the onlooker by acting on the conscious and unconscious, "entangling him, as it were, in its complex coils."<sup>25</sup>

Picasso's "protest" is like the others discussed up to this point--against the ravages of war, and its accompanying injustice to Humanity. This great artist used his own particular style to put forth the message to the people, and there are those who claim that this is among

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<sup>23</sup> Juan Larrea, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 39-40.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

Picasso's greatest works. On the other hand, there are those art critics who feel that he has overweighted this work with the message element. Though this may lack the directness of a Goya, or the pathetic humanitarian approach of a Kollwitz, I feel that Picasso has clearly "protested" against war, and in terms of the art of today. He is not interested in representing nature, but is interpreting nature and that which he sees about him in his own particular style.

Another great contemporary artist, Georges Rouault (1871- ), has been selected as the last of the artists who "protested" against war. I am discussing him again (his work relative to "protest" against society was discussed earlier) since I feel that he represents a universal approach in "protest" against war. This approach is basically the return to religion--on man's humility before Our Father. We should adhere to the words of the Lord's Prayer, "...and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors..."

Rouault was a devout Catholic (converted) and I feel that this is apparent in all his works. There is none of the violence, the bloodiness--but only calmness. Whereas his earlier works were more emotional, his later works (after 1911) had much of the mature dignity. "...To vicious protest has succeeded a resignation which surrenders nothing of pity but much of hate."<sup>26</sup> Rouault's series of

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<sup>26</sup> James Thrall Soby, Georges Rouault, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1945, p. 19.

series of prints for Miserere et Guerre were executed between 1916-1918, and 1920-1927. They were done as part of a commissioned work for one hundred etchings. The book was never published, and only fifty-seven out of the etchings were issued officially. "The themes of the prints are eternal, they deal with conflict and are of the most broadly applicable kind..."<sup>27</sup>

Plate VI (page 76), Man is a Wolf to Man, shows men "...lying armed and despairing amid the industrial supply houses of war with which he has replaced the cathedrals of Rouault's beloved Middle Ages."<sup>28</sup> There is no violence, but I feel that there does exist depth of feeling--of loneliness, emptiness, and despair. The dark windows contrasted against the light houses appear to be giving testimonial to the utter folly of war and destruction.

Who Does Not Frown?, Plate VII (page 77), shows a sad-faced clown--that is all. Yet, I feel that in this figure, we can gain much as to the helplessness of Man--for he "...appears as a professional performer turned helpless spectator..."<sup>29</sup> E. D. H. Johnson summarized Rouault's commentary on modern civilization when he stated:

"In a world haunted by misery, war comes increasingly to seem not so much the cause as the grimmest effect of our spiritual desolation. For Rouault the real tragedy of the human sit-

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 22.  
<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 23.  
<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

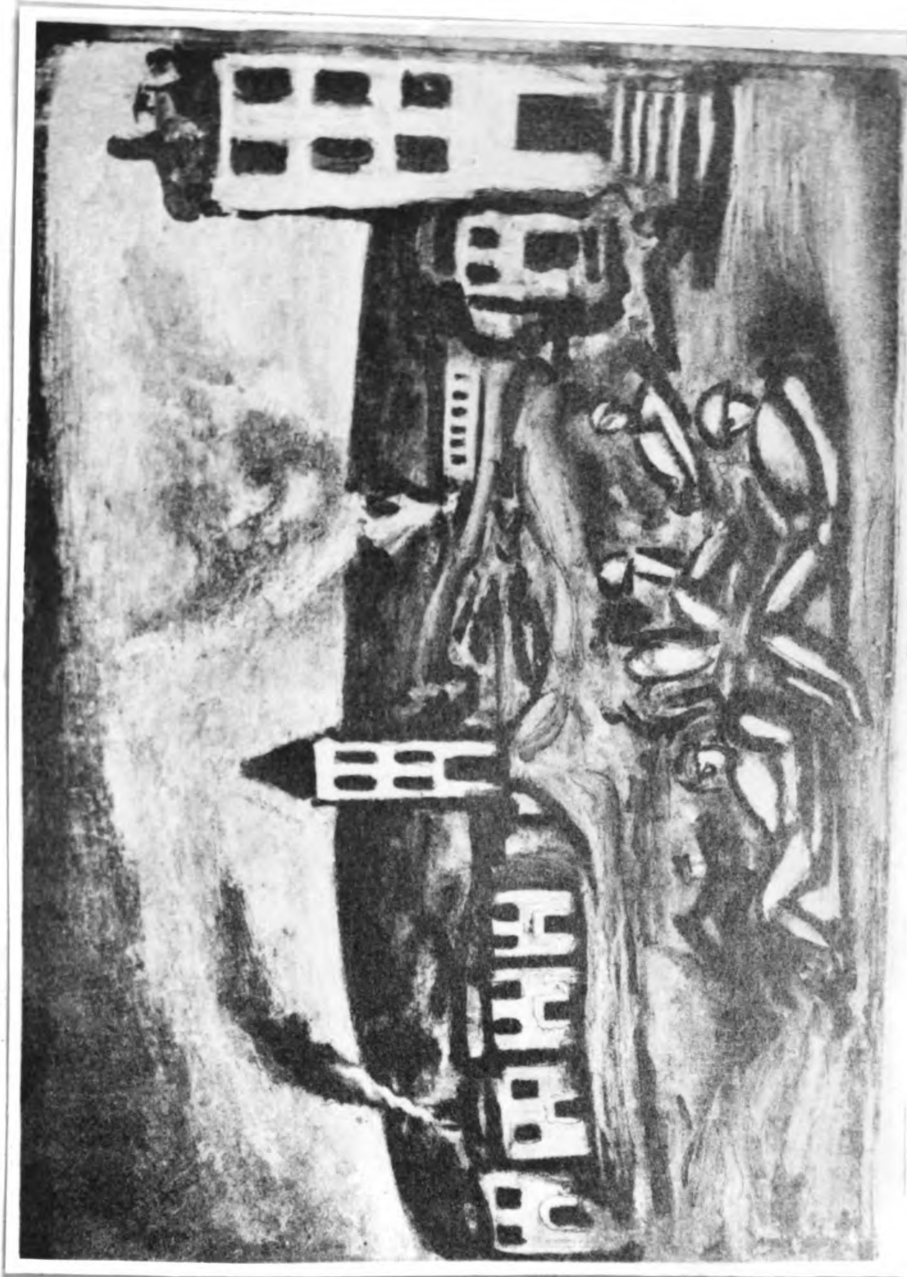


PLATE VI. Rouault. Man is a Wolf to Man. Etching from Miserere et Guerre, 1916-1931, 16 5/8 x 23 1/2", The Museum of Modern Art, Extended Loan. (From James Thrall Soby, Georges Rouault, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1945, page 97).



PLATE VII. Rouault. Who does not Frown? Etching from Miserere et Guerre, 1916-1931, 22 1/4 x 16 7/8", The Museum of Modern Art, Extended Loan. (From James Thrall Soby, Georges Rouault, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1945, page 102).

uation is not the man's inhumanity to man, but man's inhumanity to himself. Thus, where Goya stopped short with registering the physical atrocities of warfare, Rouault lays bare the crucified Christ within each heart. The drama is an intensely private one...we are made to know the everlasting implications of our most mundane commitments. The artist's judgments are inflexibly stern; yet nowhere does righteous indignation obscure the underlying pity and grief born of the wisdom that no man is without guilt, that all share alike in the fate of humanity."<sup>30</sup>

Rouault talks to us through symbols, and the actors are timeless personages of allegory. The outward appearance reflects in inverse ratio the state of interior grace--"Nakedness and a sense of stripped skeletal structure within the flesh betoken the ordeal of true faith, epitomized in the wasted and suffering body of Christ."<sup>31</sup>

Thus, Rouault's "protest" against war is along personal lines rather than in terms of humanity in general. The spiritual aspect is emphasized, and the figure of Christ is dominant. Man must live more by the teachings of Christ with sincerity of heart. "It is not that we need to be reminded, actually, in picture and in words, of the horrors of war, as they were etched or engraved by a Callot, a Goya, a Currier and Ives, a Kerr Eby, a George Grosz, but that we are constantly reminded as Rouault does, of the spiritual forces underlying the impact and incongruity of war and destruction."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Georges Rouault, Miserere et Guerre, Kleemann Galleries, New York, no page.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., no page.

<sup>32</sup> Karl Kup, "Prints," American Artist, vol. 11, p. 41 (January, 1947).

In the "protests" against war, we have seen those earlier artists who were harsh in their condemnation; of those who spared nothing to present war in all its brutal nakedness. Goya stand out as an example of this type. Kollwitz introduced the element of the suffering humanity in the guise of womanhood, and Grosz vividly painted the destitution and misery in the backwash of war. Today, Rouault stands as the dominant figure in this "protest" against war--but with an emphasis on the spiritual aspect. The individual self must re-evaluate himself in the eyes of Our Father, and realize that we will be judged along with the rest of humanity. It is like a cry back to religion as of Rouault's beloved Middle Ages, and I feel that we are lacking the spiritual element in today's material-minded world. The artists have "protested" against war throughout the ages, and I feel that we do need to take cognizance of the fact that these men are almost like prophets of early Biblical times.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Now that we have surveyed the "protest" artists and their messages, let us take an objective approach to see if these artists did have any influence. Were they able to bring about the correction of some evil? Was the lot of Mankind improved? In order to carry this discussion of the "Social Protest Artists in Western Art" to a logical conclusion I feel that we must evaluate them in terms of their effectiveness. If, going back to one of the basic tenets, the artist is an integral part of society and that he is highly sensitive to his environment, then should not he be the one to take the lead in correcting that which he is "protesting" against? Admittedly, it will be extremely difficult to single out any one reason for improvements or change within a society, but we may be able to point out instances where the artist could possibly have exerted his influence. The complexity of society does not allow for a simple, clear-cut definite answer. I feel further that the "protest" artists may have contributed to the spiritual aspect of a society, and yet, this quality is intangible and cannot be measured.

Let us glance back and see what happened in the realm of "Society" and "Injustice and Corruption."

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, there was a general movement for social reforms. Agitation was begun in many countries for what has been called economic democracy, which "...implies that all men shall have a substantially equal opportunity to make the most of their latent abilities."<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century too, we had the rise of the proletariat which was one of the effects of the Industrial Revolution. "The period from 1900 to 1914 was an era of great progress in social reform and of magnificent dreams for the future."<sup>2</sup> William Gropper's studies of the United States Senate certainly are not the most complimentary--his was a biting satire against the ways of our Senate. In 1941, his paintings were shown with paintings and pictures of Loyalist fighters for Spain, of air bombings during World War II, and of workers and street characters. Was this not a practical application of the usefulness of the "social protest" art?

I believe that the artist's task lies more in the realm of broad contributions as fostering the maturity of the personality. A more specific contribution might be in the field of unifying certain specific feelings in a society. Gotshalk listed three broad contributions

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<sup>1</sup> Edward McNall Burns, Western Civilizations, Their History and Their Cultures, W.W.Norton and co., New York, 1949, p. 604.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 655.

which need to be considered when one is weighing the effectiveness of the work of fine art and of "social protest artists". These were:<sup>3</sup> (1) Art can make the mind more flexible, receptive, discriminate, and responsive; (2) can cultivate a sense of human worth and dignity; and (3) can suggest generalized models for human living in all its forms. In addition to making for a richer personal life, "...it makes for decent social action; for we act largely on the basis of what we sense and imagine, on what we feel and think, on what we value and cherish."<sup>4</sup> And if fine arts can refine behaviour, "...they constitute a discipline in decency and a modification of character from which decent social action can spring."<sup>5</sup> If art can function as a tonic lift, a morale builder, of hope, and of courage, then I feel that it will have accomplished its task--and there is no tangible scale by which we can measure these. Basically the question is, what is the function of art in general? "The power to translate sensate experience into some larger frame of reference, i.e., to render sensations meaningful, is the supreme function of art."<sup>6</sup> If we are to agree with this answer, then I feel that in view of the constant changes in society and civilizations, art has contributed to

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<sup>3</sup> D. W. Gotshalk, Art and the Social Order, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1947, pp 212-215.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>6</sup> David M. Robb and J. J. Garrison, Art in the Western World, Harper and Brothers, New York, London, 1935, 1942, p. 847.

that change or improvement.

Let us examine something more concrete in the "protests" against war to see if we can find any specific evidence on the effectiveness of the artist. Of Callot's works, Klingender stated:

"...the actual effect produced on posterity by the *Miseres et Malheurs de la Guerre* has been immeasurably...profound. Just as the formal quality of Callot's style in many respects anticipated the light and airy caprices of the Rococo, so his approach to the picaresque theme in general anticipated Le Sage's *Gil Blas*. *Gil Blas* was the bridge between the grim cynicism of the genuine picaresque novel and the graceful brilliance of the *philosophes* who prepared the soil for the French Revolution. By its very contrast to the abuses they exposed, their elegant ingratiating style became a mighty weapon."<sup>7</sup>

In addition to this aspect, Callot's subject matter gave inspiration to others who followed, such as Goya. Kup, the Curator of Prints of the New York Public Library believes that the work of Callot must have horrified the people then as they teach us a lesson today. The utter folly of destruction was his theme, and I feel that he has been effective in impressing that on our minds. Of Goya's series on the *Desastres de la Guerra*, Kup stated: "The plundering and looting of French armies was not stopped by the accusing plate of Goya's but the artist's wrath has given the world an unforgettable monument and one that should be engraved upon every invitation to a

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F. D. Klingender, "Les Miseres et Malheurs de La Guerre," *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 81, p. 206, (August, 1942).

peace conference."<sup>8</sup>

Another one of the effects of Goya's prints may possibly be drawn from the historical aspect. This may be inferred from the fact that "The First episode of Napoleon's downfall was the Spanish revolt which broke out in the summer of 1808...the courage of Spain in resisting the invader promoted a spirit of defiance elsewhere, with the result that Napoleon could no longer count upon the docility of any of his victims."<sup>9</sup> This historical fact coupled with Goya's bitter indictment, could possibly have influenced the other nations of any subsequent age in resisting any invader. However, Goya was not a propagandist--he only meant to put down vividly his first impressions, and yet deeper than this, I feel a universal message against domination and wars.

Kaethe Kollwitz was refused the gold medal (even though recommended for it by the jury) by the Emperor in her work, The Weavers, in the Berlin Exhibition of 1898. "When Hitler went into Poland, among the first individuals he earmarked for the death penalty were the artists who indulged in social painting and cartooning."<sup>10</sup> Kollwitz was among those exiled when Hitler came to power, as were numerous other artists, including George Grosz and Max Beckmann, for their biting criticisms. When Grosz came

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<sup>8</sup> Karl Kup, "Prints," American Artist, vol. 11, p. 40, (January, 1947).  
<sup>9</sup> Edward McNall Burns, op. cit., p. 518.  
<sup>10</sup> Alonzo Lansford, "Depressionist School," Art Digest, vol. 21, p. 11 (March 1, 1947).

to the United States, he felt that he wanted to get away from themes dealing with war and death. Yet, when he retired from the field of social satire for "pure" painting, he was the subject of critical fire from Miss McCausland, the art editor of the Springfield (Massachusetts) Union and Republican. She asked, "Shall the artist concern himself with only his art or shall he take part in the wider life of a citizen?"<sup>11</sup> After World War I, Grosz's style flourished. The principle was this: "Let the artist express his innermost emotions; that is enough. In that era, and in that oppressed country, the mood was the logical product of historical forces."<sup>12</sup> But today, the artist should not only express his own emotions, but also the larger truths and enduring goals of human life. In this endeavor, the artist must be on the side of life, not death.

When one glances back over the history of civilizations, it is apparent that we have had wars regardless of the "protests" by these artists. What, then, is the answer? Is the artist simply painting these "protests" as an outlet for his own tensions? For recognition? For social acceptance? the answer to why we have wars is indeed a difficult one, and I do not propose to offer a solution. As was mentioned in the Introduction, the Malthusian theory accepts wars as an inevitable and even a desirable thing. William Galt has

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<sup>11</sup> "Citizens or Artist?" Art Digest, vol. 13, p. 7  
(April 15, 1939).  
<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 7.



proposed a psychological solution. He stated that "War is a disease of society just as schizophrenia is a disease of the human personality, and society can only be cured of its ills by returning to its 'biological heritage of cooperation and truer social integration.'"<sup>13</sup> Or a theory by Read in which he states that societies have a life cycle like human beings. They have two moods, zest and apathy.<sup>14</sup> Zest is a period of adventure, expression and creative activity in the arts. Apathy is accompanied by national wealth and vast possessions, which implies first security, then boredom, and finally decadence. According to Burckhardt and other philosophers of history, war then has a vital function in the social development--that is, "...War restores real ability to honor."<sup>15</sup> Read makes a point that with the devastating arms we have (such as the Atomic Bomb), societies are bound to be exhausted. As a result, other philosophers have sought a moral equivalent of war to fit the general theory.

I feel, however, that the work of the artists has not been in vain. If one will recall the trend of this "protest" art against war, he will note that there was a trend from the violent, bloody, brutal aspects of war to the calmer, spiritual phase. Is this not indicative of the fact that the artists (and people) have become sensitive to the utter folly

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<sup>13</sup> Herbert Read, The Grass Roots of Art, Wittenborn and Company, New York, 1947, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

and the absurdity of wars? Instead of graphically appealing to the blood instinct of man, the approach is to try to reach him through his heart. The material wealth and possessions, I feel, has become less significant to many. It is along these intangible lines that the artists have made their deepest impress. No one or no single thing will put an end to wars, as we no doubt know--but certainly the artists have made themselves heard in this struggle to eliminate wars. Bitterness and hatred was the aftermath of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles. There was less bitterness and hatred for the enemy after World War II as evidenced by the re-educational efforts of those in command as well as the occupation forces. A more humanitarian brotherly approach is being taken today.

I believe that the artists in their "protests" against "Society", "Injustice and Corruption," and "War," have made a positive effort in the right direction. To expect the individual artists to accomplish miracles as to the elimination or correction of evils, is fantastic. The subject matter which the artist selects can reflect what is happening in society. It thus becomes an avenue for directing our attention, and though its effects are only a matter of speculation, we should not ignore them. We should not ignore these artists since it is their sensitivity which should eventually make the world a better place in which to live.

## CONCLUSIONS

When such evidence as Hitler's earmarking social conscious artists for the death penalty, the exiling of artists active in social criticism, the refusal of honor to an artist who deals in "gutter art", are presented to us, then it appears that the "social protest" artists have been effective. It is not what they accomplished directly, but more of how the work affected those about them. Certainly, if these artists were not effective, would there be any reason to exile them or to refuse them honor? It seems that these artists must have taken the lead in the "protest" against an evil in their society. I feel that it is their high degree of sensitivity to those things about them which makes them an important segment of our society.

Their message is universal, for even though the immediate cause of a particular work of art may have its roots in a specific episode, these artists have so imbued the work so that it takes on an eternal and universal message. The depth of their understanding has been brought to fore through their own particular medium. With wider dissemination of their "protests" possible through the new and improved mediums (as lithography), a greater portion of the population can



now be reached. All the population, whether they be rich or poor, education or uneducated, can easily understand the graphic representation of the artist's "protest" against a wrong or evil. In the "protest" art of today, the work intrinsically is a fine painting or print regardless of the subject matter or message. The "protest" does not take the form of trite melodrama, and does not insult the intelligence as did the Depressionist School.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Soviet critic, A. Solodovnikov, there is "a clash of two general trends in art. One of these trends is founded on the principle that the chief purpose of art is to carry man away from reality, to provide amusement and relaxation; the other claims that art is called upon to educate society."<sup>2</sup> Solodovnikov further states that the whole world is witnessing aggrandizement of forces of regimentation and collectivism. This anti-individualistic tendency is universal--the individual is submerged to the masses as evidenced by mass production, the radio, and the packaged foods, However, it is against this current that we find the artist, for "The artist by instinct and training stands apart from this collective drift. He believes in freedom and individuality, that is to say, a personal view-

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<sup>1</sup> Alonzo Lansford, "Depressionist School," Art Digest, vol. 21, p. 11 (March 1, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> Carl Zigrosser, The Book of Fine Prints, Crown Publishers, New York, 1937, 1948, p. 198.

point is his greatest asset."<sup>3</sup> Cheney, in his World History of Art (page 903), stated that: "Grosz might be taken as a symbol of an artist endowed with a gift approaching genius thrown into the chaotic cauldron of contemporary civilization, struggling to find some point at which art--which presupposes a certain calm and detached imaging--can be used in service to society." As the artist is trying to find his place in society, so should the public find its place in the life of the artist and what he has to say.

During World War II, the artists demonstrated that their talents could be used in a useful manner. Murals adorning the interiors of the service centers for the morale of the troops, the works of art as a mean of enjoyment and sanctuary in times of stress and need, and the formation of the Artist's Society for National Defense. Art can well be used as that element which maintains society in equilibrium, and I feel that it is the artists' sensitivity which accounts for this useful effort.

"Social protest art" is only one phase of the whole field of art. Today, we can see how this art expresses the tensions and catastrophes of our age. The message is to shock and wake the public to the sensibility of the artist. What cannot be said, can be felt...and if "protest" art can so direct our attention, then it will

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 199.

have accomplished its purpose. The rest will be up to us--we have to take the action. "It is only when we have clearly recognized the function of art as a mode of knowledge parallel to the other modes by which man arrives at an understanding of his environment that we can begin to appreciate its significance in the history of mankind."<sup>4</sup>

In the final analysis, I realize that the effectiveness of the "Social Protest Artists in Western Art" can not be measured by any well-defined scale, and yet, I believe that the evidence presented in this thesis indicates that we should not ignore their "protests". Our society is an expansive and complex thing, and just as the different individual personalities go to make up the personality of that society, in like manner, the different degrees of healthiness of different segments of society, determine the health of that society. This is where the "social protest artists" fit--they are a small part of a greater whole, and yet they have a worthwhile contribution to make.

A joint statement on modern art by The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, may well summarize the theme of my thesis. Though this statement is on modern art and not on "social protest

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<sup>4</sup>

Herbert Read, Art and Society, Macmillan Company New York, 1937, p. xix.



art", I feel that this may be applicable to the "protest" artists.

"Contrary to those who attack the advanced artist as anti-social, we believe in his spiritual and social role. We honor the man who is prepared to sacrifice popularity and economic security to be true to his personal vision. We believe that his unworldly pursuit of perfection has a moral and therefore a social value. But we do not believe that unreasonable demands should be made on him... Though his art may symbolize discipline or liberty, he cannot be asked to save a civilization."

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